

Italian foreign minister resigns

ROME (R) — Italian Foreign Minister Vincenzo Scotti resigned on Wednesday, just a month after the formation of the new government, the speaker of the lower house of parliament said. Speaker Giorgio Napolitano read out a letter from Mr. Scotti saying that as he was leaving the government, he no longer wanted to resign his parliamentary seat. A second minister, Foreign Trade Minister Claudio Vitalone, asked the Senate to suspend his previously-offered resignation from the upper house of parliament and party colleagues said his resignation from the government was imminent. Mr. Scotti and Mr. Vitalone both belong to the dominant Christian Democrat Party and government sources linked the moves to party infighting. Mr. Scotti is a leading candidate to take over as leader of the Christian Democrats. Christian Democrat members of Prime Minister Ciriaco De Mita's cabinet had all agreed to resign their seats in parliament, although ministers from other parties in the coalition did not follow suit. Mr. De Mita's government, a fragile four-party coalition, earlier survived an important test when the lower house approved an emergency budget package by a wide margin.

King receives academy students

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein received at the Royal Court Wednesday students from the Royal Command and Staff Academy. King Hussein expressed his pride in them and the efforts they exerted during their study at the college. King Hussein reviewed at the meeting development Jordan witnessed over the past decades despite grave challenges and scarcity of resources. The King affirmed that the Jordanian people "will keep their heads high and will be an example and model. We will perform our duty in the best manner so that the verdict of the generations to come will be in favour of us, not against us." The meeting was attended by His Royal Highness Prince Faisal Bin Al Hussein, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Royal Court Chief Khalid Al Karaki, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Field Marshal Fathi Abu Taleh, and senior officials. Earlier in the day, His Majesty King Hussein attended the graduation ceremony of a new batch from the Royal Command and Staff Academy.

Volume 17 Number 5066

AMMAN THURSDAY-FRIDAY, JULY 30-31, 1992, MUHAREM 30- SAFR 1, 1413

Price: Jordan 100 fils; Saudi Arabia 1.50 riyals; UAE 1.50 dirhams

Algerian opposition slams austerity plan

ALGIERS (R) — A major opposition party has attacked Algeria's new prime minister for promising further austerity and said only a properly-elected government could rescue the country. The Front of Socialist Forces (FFS) said in a statement published in Wednesday's newspapers it "cannot accept that an already impoverished people pays, yet again, for the government's mismanagement with even more hardship." New Prime Minister Belaid Abou Slim declared on Monday that Algeria had to switch to a war economy, cutting imports to bare essentials and closing factories if necessary in order to service \$25 billion of foreign debt. The FFS said: "Only a legitimate government can have the time needed to act and the essential public support to engage the country in a medium and long-term process of national recovery."

Bush reassures Yeltsin of aid

WASHINGTON (AP) — President George Bush called Russian President Boris Yeltsin Wednesday and told him he was optimistic about winning passage of a multibillion-dollar aid package for the former Soviet republics now nearing a final vote in Congress. Mr. Bush and Mr. Yeltsin also discussed the situation in Iraq. White House spokesman Martin Fitzwater said Mr. Bush spoke with Mr. Yeltsin for 15 minutes.

Spanish foreign minister visits Fez

RABAT (R) — Spanish Foreign Minister Javier Solana arrived in the central Moroccan city of Fez on Wednesday on his first official visit abroad since his appointment a month ago. He was due to be received by King Hassan II in the monarch's mountain palace at Ifrane and confer with his Moroccan counterpart Abdel Latif Filali. Spanish sources said the purpose of his 24-hour visit was primarily to establish personal contact with Moroccan leaders. Topics at his talks would include the question of Moroccan immigrants in Spain and economic cooperation.

Blast reported at Russian gas pipeline

MOSCOW (R) — An explosion closed a gas pipeline near the Russian town of Krasnoturk, but no casualties were reported, ITAR-TASS news agency said on Wednesday. Gas was diverted to a reserve pipeline, the agency said. Krasnoturk is in Russia's Sverdlovsk region, about 1,500 kilometres southeast of Moscow. The agency said the explosion took place on Tuesday night. Emergency repair teams were already working at the scene, which had been cordoned off. It did not say how long it would take to repair the damaged pipeline.

Brunei tightens laws on drugs

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, Brunei (R) — Brunei has tightened its drug laws to provide for the death penalty for cannabis and opium traffickers, officials said on Wednesday. Capital punishment is already automatic for anyone caught with more than 15 grammes of heroin and morphine. Under the new laws, those caught with more than 200 grammes of cannabis and opium will also be sent to the gallows. At present cannabis and opium peddlers are given a maximum sentence of 20 years in jail and 15 strokes of the cane.

Velayati visits Italy

NICOSIA (AP) — Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati departed Tehran on Wednesday for a two-day visit to Rome, the Islamic Republic News Agency said. The agency reported that Italy's ambassador to Iran, Giovanni Castellana, told the English-language Tehran Times that Mr. Velayati's trip "will pave the way for better reciprocal relations." Talks would also include discussion of Iraq, Bosnia-Herzegovina and the former Soviet Union, "particularly Central Asia," the newly appointed ambassador was quoted as saying.

Lower House insists on its own version of draft law on political parties

Deputies reject Upper House-proposed amendments, return legislation to Senate

By P.V. Vivekanand
 Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Lower House of Parliament Wednesday sent back the draft law on political parties to the Upper House (Senate) refusing to endorse amendments proposed by the Senate. However, government officials and Parliament observers said they did not expect the issue to become a bone of contention between the elected Lower House and the appointed Senate, which meets today to discuss its response.

"I don't think there is going to be any major problem in the House of Notables (Senate) since the move from the House of Representatives is backed by a majority," said one senior official, adding that the government had made its position clear to the Senate.

In its present form, the draft law, which was approved after amendments and sent to the Senate by the Lower House in mid-July, represents a "consensus between the government and the various parliamentary blocs" in

the House, the official noted. "A lot of deliberations and discussions between the government and the various blocs went into the draft law before it was approved by the Lower House," the official said. "Obviously the deputies feel strongly that no amendments should be incorporated into the law."

The Senate, which referred the legislation back to the House last week after incorporating what many observers describe as "minor changes," had only "sought to make things clear in the law," according to an observer. One of the Senate-proposed amendments (to Article 21 of the law) suggests that political activities be kept away from government as well as private schools while the House-approved version only referred to "government institutions."

The government had lobbied against this inclusion in the law, said the official, commenting that "anyone who knows our society will agree that there is indeed a need for political awareness among our students."

But, as Deputy Prime Minister Thounqan Hindawi explained to the House Wednesday, the government compromised with the Senate if only because of its determination to ensure the passage of the law as soon as possible.

The Senate also decided to include the phrase "within the governs of the law" to Article 18, which offers "immunity" to "offices, documents, correspondence and means of communication" of any political party against arbitrary government action.

The official explained that this approach appeared to be based on senators' desire to "make things entirely clear with no ambiguity." According to the official, it would not have made any difference whether or not the phrase was included in the law since there was no room for the government to adopt any arbitrary action against political parties without the proper legal and judicial backdrop.

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Anti-inflation strike paralyses Lebanon

BEIRUT (Agencies) — A nationwide strike to protest a worsening economic crisis gripped Lebanon Wednesday as the value of the Lebanese pound neared record lows.

Banks, shops, restaurants, newspapers, movie theaters, amusement centres and other businesses closed in line with the strike called by the 350,000-strong General Federation of Labour Unions.

Helmeted government troops and red-beret riot police manned checkpoints in major commercial districts across Beirut and other Lebanese cities to confront outbreaks of violence, though none were reported initially.

Beirut airport was abiding by a two-hour "symbolic" work stoppage as of 11 a.m. (0800 GMT), delaying departing flights. No incoming flights were scheduled. The labour federation called the one-day "warning strike" to protest against the rapid decline of the Lebanese currency, which rated 2,040 to the U.S. dollar on Tuesday.

That was close to the record low of 2,100 to the dollar, which sparked nationwide violence May 6 and forced the government of Omar Karame to resign amid the worst economic crisis in the country's 48 years of independence.

The pound's nosedive sent prices sky high in a country that imports at least 85 per cent of its basic needs.

The pound, which sold at 2.5 to the dollar before the 1975-1990 civil war, rated 1,750 to the dollar when Prime Minister Rashid Solh formed his 20-man cabinet to replace Mr. Karame's on May 16. The labour group said it was giving Mr. Solh's cabinet a 10-day moratorium to deal with the economic crisis.

"In spite of the government's irresponsible actions, we are ready for serious dialogue to find ways to solve the economic problem... otherwise, the state would bear the consequences," a federation statement said.

Union Officials said they toured the streets of major cities and towns to make sure the action was peaceful as demanded by the authorities.

Interior Minister Sami Al Khateeb said in a statement: "Lebanon is a Democratic country and it is the right of the people to express their opinion freely. Our main concern is that the strike be peaceful and law and order be maintained."

There was no official comment on the impact of the strike.

Mr. Solh has promised to give

Honecker in Berlin to face charges

BERLIN (AP) — Former East German leader Erich Honecker returned to his homeland Wednesday to face charges that he was responsible for the deaths of hundreds of Germans who tried to escape his hardline communist dictatorship.

Germany promised a "fair trial," not tainted by revenge for his repressive rule.

Mr. Honecker, 79, arrived at Tegel airport in western Berlin aboard an Aeroflot airliner shortly after 8 p.m. (1800 GMT), to be arrested immediately on charges of manslaughter related to deaths of people who tried to escape East Germany.

The arrival was shown live on national ARD television. A handful of people carried old East German flags outside the airport terminal demonstrating for Mr. Honecker to be freed.

His return capped a 17-month drama since he and his wife Margot were shipped to Moscow from a Soviet Red Army hospital outside Berlin. Since December they had been held up in the Chilean Embassy in Moscow, fighting extradition to Germany.

Mr. Honecker raised his right fist in a defiant old-style communist salute as he walked out of

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Iraqis Tuesday stage anti-American demonstrations in Baghdad

U.N. team finds no weapons material in Iraqi ministry

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — U.N. weapons inspectors wrapped up a search of Iraq's Ministry of Agriculture on Wednesday and said they had found no evidence directly relating to weapons of mass destruction.

But team leader Achim Biermann of Germany, whose inspection ended a standoff laced with threats of U.S. military action against Iraq, held out the possibility that relevant materials could have been removed from the buildings.

"We did not find any 687 direct related material," Mr. Biermann told a news conference, referring to the Security Council ceasefire resolution passed after the Gulf war.

As the U.N. experts conceded their failure, Baghdad boasted that Iraq's dignity had been restored during its standoff with the West.

Iraqi Television showed President Saddam Hussein taking a symbolic swim in a river near his hometown. There also was footage of a bare-chested Saddam driving a speedboat, showing that he and President George Bush share an interest in the water sport.

A previous inspection team was barred from the ministry and gave up a 17-day stake-out last week because of increasingly hostile demonstrations. U.N. officials have repeatedly expressed concerns that the Iraqis used or remove weapons-related documents.

U.N. experts suspected the ministry contained documents on Iraq's chemical, biological, nuclear and ballistic weapons. Iraq denied the charge.

Iraqis Tuesday staged demon-

strations in Baghdad and other cities, but protesters were kept away from the Ministry of Agriculture.

In Manama, Bahrain, a U.N. spokeswoman said the inspection team was to leave Iraq on Wednesday evening along with Rolf Ekeus, head of the U.N. special commission dismantling Iraq's weapons of mass destruction under the terms of the Gulf war ceasefire.

Mr. Ekeus negotiated an end to the standoff. He came to Iraq with the inspectors to supervise the search and to discuss arrangements for future inspections under the terms of the ceasefire.

On Tuesday night, while the inspectors were still inside the ministry, Iraqi Television presented rare shots of them going about their work.

They were seen sitting through dustbins, looking under rugs and carpets, entering toilets and bathrooms and checking inside sewage pipes.

Mr. Biermann, asked whether any documents or materials were taken out of the buildings, said: "No we did not take any material from the ministry."

Asked whether he found anything dubious inside, he said: "It is a little bit too early."

He would not say whether he found any trace of material having been removed by the Iraqis from the ministry. "Those are special points which we have to discuss amongst ourselves."

The United Nations and Iraq have each claimed victory over the way the ministry was inspected.

(Continued on page 5)

Israeli authorities seal Jenin home

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — The Israeli army Tuesday sealed the home of Ahmad Fadal Awad in the Jenin refugee camp in the occupied West Bank. Mr. Awad is suspected of stabbing an Israeli Arab earlier this year, the army said.

Mr. Awad's family appealed to the supreme court against the sealing order, but was rejected, an army statement added.

Israeli and Western human rights have protested such sealing as collective punishment.

In the Gaza refugee camp of Rafah, Arab reporters said soldiers opened fire on a bus of children, wounding a 12-year-old boy in the head.

An army spokesman said the soldiers opened fire with rubber bullets on a group of Palestinian stone-throwers and one boy was wounded.

Meanwhile, the Israeli government has requested a delay in an Israeli court hearing on appeals of 11 Palestinians ordered expelled to allow the government time to formulate a policy on expulsions.

The appeal hearing is scheduled for next week just before Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is to hold his first meeting with President George Bush and as the United States is trying to renew Arab-Israeli peace talks.

Israel's policy of expelling Palestinians has angered the Arabs and been criticised by the United States and other Western nations as a violation of international covenants.

The request for a delay came after a meeting between Mr. Rabin, who also is defence minister, and military and legal officials failed to establish a policy before the hearing next Sunday, Israeli army radio reported.

The radio quoted Mr. Rabin's

spokesman, Gad Ben Ari, as saying discussions would continue.

Justice Ministry spokeswoman Etti Eshed declined to give details on the meeting, but confirmed state attorney Borit Beinisch asked the supreme court to delay the hearing until late August.

Ms. Eshed quoted the state attorney as noting Mr. Rabin had been in office only two weeks and saying the government needs "an additional short period of time" to consider the issue.

She added the supreme court had not yet replied to the request. Lawyers for the 11 Palestinians slated for expulsion have said their clients have been offered "voluntary exile" for a limited time. Israel Radio reported that several agreed but then changed their mind.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres advocates granting Europe a more active role in Arab-Israeli arms control talks, Israeli television and radio reported Tuesday.

Mr. Peres voiced his position in a discussion with defence ministry director David Ivri, who heads the Israeli delegation on regional arms control, the reports said. Mr. Ivri agreed with the foreign minister, they added.

Mr. Peres still needs to bring his proposal to Mr. Rabin, the television report said.

Mr. Peres proposes that the European Community (EC) play a greater role in regional peace negotiations, mainly those dealing with Mideast arms control, Israel Television said.

The EC has hosted talks on regional trade and economic issues but was barred from sending a full delegation to arms control talks by the former government of Yitzhak Shamir.

Clifford indicted for bribery and fraud

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former Defence Secretary Clark Clifford, a pillar of the Democratic establishment and an adviser to presidents as far back as Harry Truman, was indicted along with his law partner Wednesday in a banking scandal.

The Justice Department announcement of federal charges was coupled with the disclosure in New York City that Mr. Clifford and colleague Reobert Altman were indicted by a state grand jury in the same alleged conspiracy.

The three-count federal indictment accused Mr. Clifford and Mr. Altman of enriching themselves through secret "sweetheart" loans and other agreements with the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI). The New York State indictment also accused them of accepting bribes.

Official said Mr. Clifford and Mr. Altman concealed important information from the Federal Reserve Board about the efforts of BCCI to expand their operations in the United States.

Mr. Clifford and Mr. Altman acted as BCCI's principal lawyers in this country. They also were chairman and president, respectively, of First American Bankshares, Washington's biggest bank-holding company.

Assistant Attorney General Robert Mueller said that Mr. Clifford, 85, and Mr. Altman, 45,

made millions through their secret dealings. Among those bribed were Washington attorneys Clifford and Altman, who assisted BCCI in secretly gaining control of First American Bankshares Inc., of which Clifford and Altman were officers, Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau said.

Mr. Clifford and Mr. Altman also were accused of defrauding banking regulators by illegally permitting the other BCCI conspirators to influence the conduct of First American.

The federal indictment charged Mr. Clifford and Mr. Altman with one count each of criminal conspiracy and with two counts each of illegally concealing material facts from federal regulators. Each count carries a maximum prison term of five years and a \$250,000 fine.

At the same time, the Federal Reserve Board announced it had begun a formal civil enforcement proceeding against Mr. Clifford and Mr. Altman to determine whether they should be permanently barred from U.S. banking.

Mr. Clifford and Mr. Altman were not immediately available for comment. They have denied knowing BCCI illegally controlled First American. Mr. Clifford, who gave federal regulators his word that BCCI had no secret ownership in First American, now says he was duped.

Debate on 'corruption' case — a political landmark

By Nermeen Murad
 Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Beyond its huge legal implications, the Lower House of Parliament's open debate on "Corruption" case, in which former Prime Minister Zeid Rifai and ex-ministers Hanna Odeh and Mahmoud Hawamdeh are implicated, is an unprecedented exercise which could change the political scene in the country.

Some analysts believe that it has already created significant change if only because it proved that democracy has institutionalised the rule of the law and that all people are equal before that law.

"The change in the political scene has already taken place," an observer of Parliament told the Jordan Times Wednesday. "Regardless of the merits of the case, there is an obvious new element now and it is that no one is above the law and everyone is accountable."

For most deputies who spoke during Monday's session of the House, the issue of whether or not to open old "corruption" cases was resolved in favour of unveiling all cases of past "corruption" and trying all those who are indicted. One deputy, however, told the House that Jordan needed all the loans and grants it could get and that the ongoing debate threatens to make the Kingdom look like a "school of embezzlement."

But that was a lone voice among many who, regardless of their personal motives, stressed the need to fight corruption even when they were defending one or more of the three officials involved in this particular case.

And apart from a consensus in Parliament on this need, cabinet members also feel that Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker's government has "gained credibility from this debate."

that all people are equal before the law," a member of the government told the Jordan Times Wednesday. "Without this credibility a government cannot function."

Observers and analysts are describing Monday's debate as a "soul-searching session" where deputies, after three years of apparent inaction, have dug up one case and "seem to have burdened it with all their feelings of guilt over not fulfilling the promises they made to their constituents in 1989 when they were elected," as one of the analysts put it.

Now that general elections is only one year away, many observers believe that this case of alleged corruption has been brought to purpose in the hope that deputies can reap its benefits in the upcoming elections.

Minister of Labour Abdul Karim Kabari, addressing the House Monday in his capacity as a deputy from Maan, said: "It appears that the election-campaign season has opened."

Other deputies termed it differently. "Let this session be one of honesty, openness and courage in which we are honest with ourselves and with the people who put their trust in us," Irbid Deputy Husni Al Shiyah told the House.

Although "political opportunism" may have been apparent in Monday's discussions, analysts believe that "even a little bit of political acting is sanctioned in democracy."

What really matters is the emergence of a "combination of accountability" in the executive and legislative branches of governments, said one analyst. In that sense the political implications of the case will outweigh its legality, especially that lawyers and many deputies believe that the case will remain a political indicator of Jordan's democratic evolution but will fall short of bringing the three officials to trial by a special court.

A two-third majority of the House (53 votes) is needed to refer the case to trial. It seems

difficult since at least 15 members have so far absented themselves from the debate. Furthermore, lawyers among the House members have expressed doubt that whether there are legal grounds for indictment of the three officials and have thus created doubt among the undecided.

If the same number of deputies absented themselves from next Monday's debate as the case was last Monday, it would be very difficult to muster enough support for the motion to refer the case to trial. Only 63 or 64 deputies are expected to attend the session.

Another point to consider is that the House is expected to vote for or against indictment on a one by one basis. The deputies will be asked to vote publicly on the charges against each of the three officials by name. This could lead to the indictment of only one of the three former officials and analysts expect Mr. Hawamdeh to be the one to be singled out.

AMMAN PLAZA

Shining at the Plaza

Howaida Al Hashim

and her Folklore Band with singers Moein Najem and Hani Samour at the One Thousand and One Nights restaurant.

For reservation: 674-111

Israeli settlement curbs will slow 1993 growth

TEL AVIV (AP) — The new Israeli government's curbs on settlement in the occupied territories have won political favour with Washington but will hamper economic growth next year.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin told the parliamentary labour and welfare committee on Tuesday there would be no quick fixes for 11.6 per cent unemployment.

Finance Minister Abraham Eliazaroff said his short-term forecast.

"The year 1993 will not be an easy year as far as production. As a result of the natural reduction in the construction sector, the gross domestic product (GDP) won't grow significantly," Mr. Shohat told reporters.

"The fruits in employment and investment will be seen in 1994-5," he added.

Mr. Rabin's two-week-old government has frozen all new building in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip in a peace gesture and effort to re-direct spending into creating jobs.

In the latest development, Industry Minister Micha Harish said on Tuesday the government would soon end incentives for establishing Israeli industry in the occupied territories where 1.75 million Palestinians and 120,000 Jewish settlers live.

The Israeli contractors' union warned the cutbacks could leave up to 12,000 construction workers unemployed. Mr. Shohat said the

government would have to pay contractors 100-150 million shekels (\$40-\$60 million) as compensation.

Washington, eager to spur slow-moving Middle East peace talks, welcomed the settlement curbs. U.S. President George Bush invited Mr. Rabin to a summit at his Maine vacation home on Aug. 10-11.

Mr. Bush had shunned Mr. Rabin's predecessor Yitzhak Shamir who angered Washington with a lavish campaign to rapidly expand the settlements.

Mr. Bush rejected a Shamir government request for \$10 billion in loan guarantee but is expected to grant Mr. Rabin the aid for resettling immigrants.

More than 420,000 Jewish immigrants, most from the former Soviet Union, have settled in Israel since late 1989. But economic expansion has not kept pace with population growth and unemployment rose to its highest level in 20 years.

The peace talks that began last October between Israel and Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestinians were set to resume in late August in Washington.

Israel Television said the government would agree to high-level European Community participation in regional talks on arms control. Mr. Shamir had opposed a European Community role for fear it was biased against Israel.

Lebanese premier rejects election observers

PARIS (R) — Lebanese Prime Minister Rasheed Al Solh, in an interview published in Paris on Tuesday, rejected suggestions that international observers could monitor forthcoming general elections in Lebanon, the first in 20 years.

"The whole international press will be present and no where more than Lebanon is it free to observe. All the embassies will also be busy," Mr. Solh told the newspaper Le Monde.

"Let all those people testify to what they have seen during the elections," he said in the interview granted just prior to his departure on Monday for a four-day visit to France.

Mr. Solh was answering questions on suggestions here that international monitors check whether the elections were fair since part of the polling was to be in areas held by Syrian troops.

France, which governed Lebanon from 1920 until independence in 1943, said last Monday it hoped the elections would take place under conditions which made their results credible.

A petition signed by dozens of French parliamentarians this month urged the United Nations Security Council to send a monitoring commission to Lebanon.

The Lebanese government has set dates for three rounds of voting in August and September before Syrian troops are due to leave Beirut and other areas for eastern Lebanon.

Le Monde said Mr. Solh was evasive when asked if Syrian troops would leave after the vote. But he said France could help Lebanon by pressing Israel to withdraw from areas it held in the south of the country.

Le Monde said Mr. Solh nearly cancelled his visit at the last minute because French authorities would not assure him he would meet President Francois Mitterrand.

Diplomatic sources in Paris said it would be a clear sign of French disapproval for Mr. Solh's policies if Mr. Mitterrand did not receive him.

Officials at the president's office said no meeting was planned at the moment but they were trying to fit one in Mr. Mitterrand's schedule.

Mr. Solh, who met on Tuesday with Finance Minister Michel Sapin and French business leaders, arrived with a ministerial team seeking aid to strengthen the army and rebuild from civil war.

Mr. Solh has said he hoped financial problems with France would be resolved during the visit. Lebanon owes France about \$80 million, mainly for arms and military equipment.



INSPECTION: A team of United Nations inspectors Tuesday enter the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation to check the building for what they suspected as documents on Iraq's weapons programme.

U.N. pledges swift action to save Somalia

NAIROBI (R) — A United Nations envoy on Wednesday pledged swift relief for Somalia's starving millions but urged feuding gunmen to stop fighting and help feed their dying nation.

"Guns are the biggest problem in that country, and some people think it is their only method of getting food," U.N. special envoy for Somalia Mohammad Sahnoun told reporters.

Speaking in Nairobi after his latest fact-finding mission to Mogadishu, Mr. Sahnoun said he wanted the U.N. to send a larger force of guards to Somalia than the 500 envisaged by the Security Council.

"I want more than 500 armed guards and we are negotiating this. I have told Somali factions they ought to come into the picture, not to squabble, but give projections on how they can improve security themselves."

It was Mr. Sahnoun's most comprehensive statement on Somalia since he was appointed to deal with the emergency and reflected renewed concern in the U.N. about the crisis.

Some 4.5 million Somalis are starving because of famine and drought but aid efforts have been hampered by the near-total breakdown of law and order since rebel clans toppled President Mohammad Siad Barre a year ago and then turned on each other.

Mr. Sahnoun said a proposal for some 6,000 peace-keeping troops to be sent to Somalia was being examined. Discussions on monitoring a ceasefire in force since March were going well.

He said the U.N. would seek the accord of all Somali factions before sending in either guards or peace-keepers "because we do not want armed guards against Somalis but with Somalis. They must, absolutely must, cooperate."



Faisal Hussein

Husseini's centre allowed to open after 4 years

JERUSALEM (AP) — A research centre run by Faisal Hussein, the chief adviser to Palestinian peace talks delegates, was allowed to reopen Wednesday after being shut for nearly four years by the army.

Closure orders for the Arab Studies Centre in East Jerusalem actually expired Tuesday night. But employees waited until Wednesday morning to open, after police failed to appear with the usual renewal of six-month closure orders.

The step was seen as an easing of restrictions on Arabs in the occupied territories since Yitzhak Rabin's left-wing government took office July 14. Mr. Rabin has promised to speed up U.S.-sponsored peace talks with Palestinians and Arab states.

A military spokesman, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the army would have no comment on the reopening of Mr. Hussein's research centre, which studies Palestinian issues.

Mr. Hussein was abroad and unavailable for comment. Employees pried open the doors, welded shut by the police on July 31, 1988, when Mr. Hussein was jailed on charges of inciting the Palestinians.

Israel had charged the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) fanned the centre's activities. Officials also said the centre was "an instrument to advance the aims" of the Palestinian uprising.

Mr. Hussein has been jailed for more than a year and a half during the uprising that began in December 1987.

The centre's five branches around Jerusalem were also reopened, employees said. The centre operates a library and a tourist centre concentrating on Palestinian folklore.

Vatican announces move towards ties with Israel

VATICAN CITY (AP) — The Vatican and Israel held their first ever official high-level talks Wednesday in a move both sides said is aimed at establishing diplomatic ties.

The absence of such ties, which the Vatican maintains with some 120 countries, has long angered Jews around the world. But it has also presented a roadblock for Vatican participation in Middle East peace talks.

Both sides agreed to set up a permanent bilateral working committee, which held its first meeting here Wednesday.

A communique issued by the Vatican said the committee would study and define "issues of reciprocal interest with a view towards normalising relations."

Top Israeli have met through the years with Vatican officials, but the meetings have been considered "private" and the Vatican has never formally granted diplomatic recognition to the Jewish state.

The Vatican has cited Israel's unsettled boundaries, the Palestinian question and the lack of an international statute for the holy places in Jerusalem as its reasons.

Jewish groups have repeatedly raised the issue to Pope John Paul II during his travels around the world.

Vatican spokesman Joaquin



Pope John Paul

Navarro declined to give a target date for the establishment of relations.

But he said the naming of the committee was a "first clear step of an official nature that can be looked-on with optimism."

Israeli embassy spokesman Raphael Gamzu said his government was ready to establish diplomatic ties quickly.

"For our part, there are no obstacles," he told the Associated Press.

Mr. Navarro was asked whether the Vatican action may anger Palestinians, of whom an influential minority — including the head of the church in Jerusalem — are Roman Catholics.

The Vatican spokesman said he did not think so, noting that various Arab delegations have been meeting with Israelis in Middle East peace negotiations.

Police recapture escaped Lebanese hijacker

Vallorbe, Switzerland (AP) — A Lebanese extremist has been recaptured nearly a week after escaping from prison, where he had been serving a life sentence for hijacking an airliner and killing a passenger, police said.

Hussein Hariri was caught shortly before midnight Tuesday while he was riding a bicycle 15 kilometres from the maximum-security prison he escaped from last Thursday with four other prisoners, including one of France's most notorious criminals, Jacques Nover.

A police officer going home at the end of his shift spotted Hariri on the bicycle on the road between the Jura mountain towns of Vallorbe and Le Pont, near the French border north of Geneva. Police said Hariri offered no resistance when the officer arrested him.

One of the escapees was recaptured almost immediately, but Hyver, also convicted of hostage taking, and two others remained at large on Wednesday, police said.

When he escaped, Hariri had been serving a life prison term for hijacking an Air Afrique airliner and killing a Freoch passenger in 1987.

He told the court he was acting as a "soldier of God." The prosecutor said he was on a mission for the pro-Iranian Hizbollah group of Lebanon, but Hariri refused to testify about the allegations.

The Swiss supreme court, which described him as a cold blooded fanatic, found him guilty of murder, attempted murder, hostage-taking and other charges. Hariri hijacked an Air Afrique

DC-10 on a flight from Brazzaville, Congo, to Paris in July 1987 to press demands for the release of Lebanese and Palestinians held by France, West Germany and Israel.

He demanded to be flown to Beirut. He shot the passenger and a flight attendant during a refuelling stop in Goveva when his deadline for servicing the plane expired.

Geneva police stormed the plane and arrested him. Hariri sawed through his cell bars in a March 1990 escape attempt, but he was caught before he left the prison grounds.

He would have been eligible for parole in the year 2003, but last month a court sentenced him to two more years for setting fire to his cell twice to protest prison conditions.

Anti-inflation strike paralyses Lebanon

(Continued from page 1)

priority to the economic crisis. But living conditions continue to slide with the cost of many basic items more than tripled since January. Inflation this year 90 per cent, according to unofficial estimates.

The minimum wage remains 120,000 pounds (about \$30). The central bank, closed by the strike, said on Tuesday the pound fell to a record low of 2,030 to the dollar because of the continued political tension over planned general elections next month — the first since 1972.

The polls are opposed by Christian parties who insist they should not be held before Syrian troops withdraw from Lebanon.

The decline of the national currency has been attributed to government over spending and corruption at a time the state treasury was virtually broke.

Mr. Solh's cabinet, in an effort to increase the state revenue, raised customs duties on imports, which also added to the price increase.

A comparative study on prices of a variety of commodities, prepared by the labour federation, said that gasoline prices jumped from 6,000 pounds per 20 liters July 1 to 10,000 on Tuesday.

Meat jumped from 6,000 pounds per kilogramme to 12,000 during the same period, the study said.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77311-19

PROGRAMME TWO
12:00 Olympics
13:00 Circus Parades
13:30 News in Arabic
14:00 News in French
14:30 Varieties
15:00 News in Hebrew
15:30 News in Arabic
16:00 The Simpsons
16:30 Civil wars
17:00 News in English
17:30 Olympics

PRAYER TIMES

06:15 Fajr
06:45 (Sunrise) Duha
12:42 Dhuhr
16:23 Asr
19:40 Maghreb
21:30 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedish Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 634390
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661737

Terrace Church Tel: 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623591
Anglican Church Tel. 623383, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Assiout International Church Tel. 827981, 883326
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Tel. 623824 and 654932
Church of the Nazareth Tel. 675691

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be fair and some clouds will appear at low altitudes. Winds will be northwesterly moderate to fresh. In Agaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Amman Min./max. temp. 16 / 28
Agaba 12 / 27
Deserts 13 / 32
Jordan Valley 23 / 36

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 29, Agaba 37. Humidity reading: Amman 51 per cent, Agaba 33 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Mohammad Al Sawwa 730255
Dr. Abdul Wahab Awd 646770
Dr. Subhi Tamouss 889803
Dr. Abdul Qader Al Lala 690498
Firas pharmacy 661912
Al Asena pharmacy 783336
Naironk pharmacy 637672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Smeisat pharmacy 637660

IRBID:
Dr. Mohammad Al Mansi (—)
Al Sheras' pharmacy (985238)
ZARQA:
Dr. Akram Haddad (—)
Khalifah pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Response 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 77121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 659000
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 787111
Amman Municipality 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Rajab 623101
Abdullah Telephone Repairs 661101
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power 636881
Company 06-53200
RJ Flight Information 06-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813613/32
Khald Maternity, J. Amn 644281/6
Alkhal Maternity, J. Amn 644241/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 64232
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisat 664171/4
Shmeisat Hospital 669131
University Hospital 645645
Al-Mushtak Hospital 677279
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/37
Al-Ahl, Abdali 664164/6
Al-Badr, J. Amman 777101/3
Al-Badr, J. Amman 775111/25
Army, Marja 891611/5
Queen Alia Hospital 62240/50
Al-Hikma Modern Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Greek Catholic Hospital (09)900500
The Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al-Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272725
The Al-Nafes Hospital (02)267100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (09)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
06:00 Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
09:15 Sana'a (RJ)
09:45 New Delhi (RJ)
10:15 Riyadh (RJ)
10:15 Dhahran (RJ)
10:15 Agaba (RJ)
10:30 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
11:00 Colombo (RJ)
11:15 Beirut (RJ)
17:45 Cairo (RJ)
17:55 Larnaca (RJ)
19:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
19:15 Bangkok, Calcutta (RJ)
19:30 Athens (RJ)
19:30 London, Berlin (RJ)
20:00 Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)
21:00 Rome (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

12:45 Abu Dhabi, Doha (GF)
14:10 Riyadh (SU)
17:25 Istanbul (TK)
20:35 Cairo (MS)
20:35 Larnaca (CY)
20:35 Amsterdam (KL)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in file per kg.

Apple (red) 350 / 350
Apricot 400 / 350
Banana 300 / 450
Banana (Mukammal) 350 / 300
Beans 560 / 300
Cabbage 90 / 40
Carrot 240 / 200
Cauliflower 240 / 180
Cucumbers (large) 90 / 40
Cucumbers (small) 140 / 90
Eggplant 350 / 450
Garlic 130 / 30
Lemon 350 / 350
Mango 440 / 360
Marrow (large) 130 / 70
Marrow (small) 260 / 200
Onion (dry) 130 / 80
Onion (green) 150 / 100
Oranges 440 / 360
Peas 420 / 400
Peanut 550 / 260
Pepper (red) 200 / 150
Pepper (green) 140 / 80
Potato 180 / 120
Sweet Melon 210 / 160
Tomato 60 / 30
Watermelon 30 / 20

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation.
Established 1975
Jordan Times مؤسسة جردان للصحافة والاعلام

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The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times advertising department.

Disease that hit home

CORRUPTION TO nations is like cancer to people. It eats away at the very fabric of society. Not only Third World countries are plagued by corruption. Even superpowers and other advanced nations have it.

For some people and countries corruption is a way in life. But the disease also has some political roots. In countries like Jordan, where the division of powers was not clear and only recently started to take shape, corruption was made possible by successive governments' overwhelming control on people's lives. It is politically accepted of course that where there is repression, corruption thrives. And it comes in varying shapes and degrees. As one deputy remarked during Parliament's Monday session, an official who uses a government vehicle to deliver goods to his home, and the other who uses his official driver to ferry his family around, and he who uses his influence to acquire government land or place his son or relative in a government position are all committing acts of corruption. And if we apply that criteria to Jordan, we find that corruption is highly rampant. In this vein, and according to this criteria, corruption did not end with the coming of the 11th Parliament in 1989 nor is it likely to stop here. It still continues, perhaps at a lower scale than in the past. It is hard to assert its magnitude.

Many people, for example, make profit from their positions without for a moment thinking that this is not right. It has, over the years, become a norm, and perhaps a God-given right, for officials to use their positions for their own benefits. It is not hard to find terribly rich men, who only 15 years ago were junior civil servants. They of course had made their fortunes through using their positions, and connections. The amazing thing about all of this is that it is rarely possible to try anyone and convict him on these grounds. The system itself is not built to do so. In democratic and advanced nations, which had learned from experience, corruption laws were developed over the years to ensure that public officials would not abuse office. Those countries have established systems of checks and balances that protect against all sorts of corruption cases or abuse of office. They usually include a general statement in the basic law that makes profiteering through the holding of a public office a crime. Then, and through their general laws, they detail and describe what constitutes abuse of office and its corresponding punishment. The case currently being debated at the Lower House of Parliament, which concerns a former prime minister and two ex-ministers should be used as well as pursuing indictment as a model for investigating the loopholes in our system. Despite our belief that political and electoral gains are behind some of the motives to open the case, and the case itself may be weak, we are not and would never advocate dropping it. But we dread the prospect that our Parliament should be wasting its and our time on a futile issue. In any case, we strongly believe that the exercise should be used to consolidate the related laws currently being debated at the House itself. No matter which way the case goes, it is the political and judicial system that needs to be tried, judged and ultimately corrected.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily Wednesday attacked the United States for flexing its military muscles in open threat to and preparation for an expected aggression on Iraq. It is disgusting to see such a world power, which claims to be keen on safeguarding human rights not only maintaining an unjust embargo on Iraq but also preparing for only another aggression on the Iraqi people, said the daily. The paper said that it seems that the U.S. president and his main opponent in the presidential campaign race are vying against one another in their bragging about the need to maintain the embargo and starve the innocent population of Iraq, the paper said. These two men find satisfaction in watching millions of other people around the world dying due to wars like those going on in Yugoslavia and Somalia or starvation resulting from the embargo in Iraq, the paper said. It said that the Americans are massing their war machinery and preparing the atmosphere for aggression on Iraq out of hatred of the Iraqi people. It is regrettable, said the paper, that the American public remains passive to Mr. Bush's moves at a time when the president and the American people realise that the American society remains plagued with crimes, AIDS, unemployment and many ills that require real war.

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i Arabic daily criticised those members of Parliament who absented themselves from a parliamentary debate on corruption in Jordan stressing the need for the legislative authority to fight corruption and those behind it by all means. Tareq Masarweh said that corruption cases in our country as those in other countries of the world should be treated with firmness and those responsible for corruption must be held accountable for their misdeeds. All those deputies who pledged in their election campaigns to fight corruption and other ills plaguing the Jordanian society should seize the opportunity of the debate in Parliament over corruption and prove their stand, demanded the writer. He said millions of dinars have been lost because of corruption, like the seizure of the shares of newspaper owners and many other instances which should be dealt with immediately. The writer said Parliament members should not escape from their responsibility and should not allow the economic corrupt officials to escape with the millions they had embezzled.

The fight against 'corruption': Nobody above the law

By Sana Atiyeh

AT LAST, corruption is coming out in the open, and it is not a moment too soon.

It is about time our honourable deputies took the initiative to at least debate one corruption case that took place several years ago and which might have cost the people a lot of money and sweat. One wonders, however, why it took so long to bring to the open such a case.

During their election campaign, at the end of 1989, most parliamentarians promised to bring to account all former officials and people who were responsible for the collapse of the Jordanian economy because of alleged corruption. Now that the next general elections are looming nearer, it seems our representatives decided to start living up to their promises.

Many people in Jordan believe that the deterioration of the national economy in the 1980s was due to suspected corruption, and, at one point, people were constantly talking about certain projects that had cost the taxpayers a lot more money than they should have.

Most of the time people were scrutinising what public officials were doing and though no one was actually brought to justice, the people's grievances were expressed in 1989 when they voted for the deputies who promised to fight corruption and investigate all those who were responsible for misusing public funds.

Because Jordan is still like a big village and people are used to talking about anything and everything all the time, an employee at a certain department would complain to a friend or relative about suspected crooked deals and would spread that so and so was involved. Assuming these allegations were correct, it didn't seem that the people involved lost any sleep over mismanaging funds that did not belong to them, either because they thought that their social status and power placed them above the law, or because they left no tracks for any concrete evidence to indict them.

When Parliament takes a vote on the first corruption case to be discussed in public,

the Azrak-Jafar highway case, it will be interesting to see who votes for indicting the former officials and who votes against that. So far, it seems the Lower House will not be able to get a two-third majority to support the accusations against the three former officials, considering that many of the deputies were members of the cabinet at the time of the corruption case, or have a vested interest in keeping the lid on these cases.

The public debate on the Azrak-Jafar highway case is only the tip of the iceberg. The people suspect much corruption went on at the time, and still do, though to a lesser degree since now there is a supervisory body that overlooks the practices of government departments and their employees.

There are those who argue that certain deputies have insisted on bringing up this corruption case in Parliament for "political reasons" and as "personal vendettas" and therefore the three former officials should not be prosecuted. This is not a convincing argu-

ment. Whatever the motives of the deputies who insist on proceeding with prosecution, corruption is corruption, and those involved in it — regardless of their family or political background, their fortune and their connections — should be brought to justice.

The deputies have a responsibility to the people who voted for them and if they do not investigate those who are allegedly responsible for misusing or mismanaging the taxpayers' money, who will? If they want to make the accused accountable for their own personal reasons, that is no concern to people (especially that politicians are known for doing things for "political reasons" and that's why they are politicians).

The people just want to see the deputies live up to their promises and do their best to meet their electorate's needs. The fight against corruption has been a major popular demand.

Many Jordanians seem to share the view of the deputies who believe they have sufficient information on the Jafar-

Azrak highway case to try the accused former officials. But will accept the final verdict as long as justice is done according to the law.

There are those who also argue that the deputies insisting on prosecuting the former officials are not being fair because there were, and are, other corruption cases that were ignored by the House, and the deputies themselves have question marks hanging over their own credibility. This, too, is not a convincing argument for not sending the case to the Higher Council, the only body that can prosecute government officials.

This case is a beginning, and one has to start somewhere, sometime. And if this case goes to the Higher Council, it will set an important precedent for further investigation of corruption cases. At least, the "corrupt" people out there will think twice before committing illegal activities, knowing that the country will not stand idle by watching public funds go to waste. Also, those corrupt people in the private sector —

no matter how high their rank in society — will perhaps, eventually, breaking the law have a hard time for instance, smuggling goods into the country. Those in the public sector might refuse to deal with them when they know they are being scrutinised by Parliament and that they too could pay a dear price for their misconduct.

It is high time this country, through our representatives in the House, started a real fight against corruption. It is a good start that at least the Azrak-Jafar highway case was openly debated in Parliament and the story was published in the local press.

Let us just hope a true fight against corruption will expand to include all parties involved in it, and not just certain people together for personal reasons.

A real fight against corruption must not be selective in establishing accountability as a weapon against corruption at all levels. We have to ensure that nobody is above the law.

The writer is on the staff of the Jordan Times.

Mossad, CIA — a 'longstanding' cooperation

By Jane Hunter

Following is the first of a three-part article on U.S. and Israeli covert operations in the Third World. The article is reprinted from *The Link*, published by Americans for Middle East Understanding, Inc. The author is editor and publisher of the *Israeli Foreign Affairs* magazine.

OUR great grand children's history books will probably list the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, the Jonathan Jay Pollard espionage affair, the Middle East peace talks and Washington's refusal to grant Israel \$10 billion worth of loan guarantees as major milestones in U.S.-Israeli relations during the Reagan and Bush administrations.

Most likely forgotten, or consigned to the realm of "conspiracy theory," will be the history of secret policies, covert operations, arms sales and cover-ups that appeared to the public as transitory scandals but, for the men at the top in both countries, may well have been the compelling dynamic of the relationship.

In foreign policy, what we saw — and thought we were voting for — was seldom what we got. Washington professed neutrality in the Iran-Iraq war while it cynically armed both sides, contributing to the war's toll of one million casualties. Israel justified the billions of dollars of U.S. aid it received annually by portraying itself as a strategic asset in the struggle against the Soviet Union and then it passed the U.S.S.R. sensitive U.S. intelligence!

In the face of scandals that would have brought any normal government down, the U.S. and Israeli governments resorted to deniability (an intelligence term for passing the buck) and they withheld incriminating documents on the grounds of "national security."

There is a striking resonance between this arrogant disregard for their electorates and the disregard for people's needs that saw hunger, ill health and joblessness increase in both Israel and the U.S.

The covert dimension that so absorbed the Reagan and Bush administrations and the Israeli governments of the past decade had its roots in a longstanding arrangement between Israel's intelligence agency Mossad and the CIA. The two agencies began working together in the 1950s, and during the 1960s the CIA gave Mossad \$10-20 million a year to help it out in the Third World. But during the Reagan years, the partnership was moved upstairs to the White House and the State Department and given both a new name, "strategic cooperation," and official status under a series of agreements.

After 1982, recalled David Kimche, who, as director of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, was Israel's pointman for strategic cooperation, the two governments "maintained, I must say, a very, very intimate dialogue on various parts of the world. We used to discuss what one should do in Third World countries, in the Middle East et cetera..."

When it was discussed at all in public, the arrangement was always presented as Israel's contribution to the Reagan administration's crusade against communism, especially where Congress had forbidden official U.S. involvement (such as Nicaragua and Angola). But it was much more than that. Often, in fact,

the covert partnership seemed more like a covert free-for-all, with the erstwhile partners indulging in contradictory sets of operations that seemed to be at odds with their own and each others' interests.

Iran, Central America

In 1980, seeking to take advantage of the turmoil following the overthrow of the shah, Iraq invaded Iran. Israel used the opportunity of the ensuing war — which would exact over one million casualties by the time it was over in 1988 — to resume the massive arms sales it had made to the shah's regime and to keep its two potential enemies wallowing in each other's blood. To provide the Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran with the U.S. arms on which the shah had built his military, Israel turned to the Reagan administration, whose willingness to collaborate in supplying Iran went against the grain of its strict arms embargo of that country and its quiet support of Iraq.

"Israel used the opportunity of the ensuing war — which would exact over one million casualties by the time it was over in 1988 — to resume the massive arms sales it had made to the shah's regime and to keep its two potential enemies wallowing in each other's blood."

The tip of the iceberg of this bizarre policy was revealed in the Iran-contra scandal that erupted in 1986, when the administration admitted it had been shipping arms to Iran (to gain the release of U.S. hostages in Lebanon, it said) and using the profits to circumvent congressional restrictions on U.S. aid to the anti-Nicaraguan contras. Because it only skated on the surface of events, the Iran-contra investigation left lingering suspicions of a cover-up in a population already disgusted with their political representatives.

The era began with the shipment of billions of dollars of arms to Iran. In an arrangement reached in 1981 by Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig, the Reagan administration reviewed and approved Israeli shipments of weapons to Iran, the "terrorist" nation administration officials publicly revealed.

According to two Reagan officials, the arrangements were worked out during three meetings in December 1980 between David Kimche, then in transition from the number two spot in Mossad and the directorship of the Israeli foreign ministry, and Robert McFarlane, who would serve as an aide to Mr. Haig. Mr. Kimche and Mr. McFarlane became the official liaisons in the early days of "strategic cooperation." Later,

when Dr. McFarlane was the president's national security adviser, they would coordinate the Iran-contra affair.

Maj. Gen. Avraham Tamir, who was a ranking official at the Israeli defense ministry at the time, told investigative reporter Seymour Hersh last year: "Every month we gave a list of American weapons and American spare parts we'd like to sell to Iran." Gen. Tamir said that the lists were handed to the U.S. ambassador to Israel at the time, Samuel Lewis.

Following the appearance of Mr. Hersh's report in the New York Times, Secretary of State James Baker acknowledged that the newly-installed Reagan administration (in which he served as White House chief of staff) "might very well" have approved the arms sales.

U.S. and Israeli officials interviewed by Mr. Hersh gave divergent answers, ranging from six to 18 months — about the duration of the Haig-Begin agreement. While the agreement was in effect, wrote Mr. Hersh, quoting former Israeli officials, some of the arms shipments were flown out of Marana Air Park near Tucson. The CIA has long used Marana as a covert air base.

According to Pakistani officials and a former Israeli intelligence operative, Israeli operatives and the CIA moved massive quantities of weapons to Iran through Pakistan.

In an affidavit filed in a 1988 Texas lawsuit, Will Northrop, who claims to have served as a counterespionage specialist with the rank of colonel in Israeli military intelligence, says that in 1981 the CIA launched an operation called "VE/GOLF," which involved shipping arms to Iran through brokers in Israel and elsewhere. In 1983, Mr. Northrop says in his affidavit, the Reagan administration set up a second arms channel, "CONDORDE-MAVAND," to market arms from NATO stores and supply spare parts directly from U.S. manufacturers.

Even after the Haig-Begin pact was terminated and Washington instituted an aggressive anti-smuggling programme, the U.S. simply observed Israeli shipments to Iran and replenished Israel's stock of the U.S. weapons it was selling. Reports detailing the Israeli sales — they came "literally by daily," according to a former high-ranking intelligence official in the Reagan administration — were routinely circulated to senior administration officials.

In March 1982, James L. Buckley, the under secretary of state for security assistance, science and technology, wrote to Sen. Charles Percy (R-IL), then chair of the Senate foreign relations committee:

"In testimony before your committee February 5, you asked me about allegations that Israel has transferred to Iran U.S. controlled defense articles in violation of our 1952 Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement. The administration has examined these allegations and has discussed them with Israel..."

We have also seen widely publicised allegations in the media [about various weapons systems transferred by Israel]... We continue to welcome any evidence concerning this or other allegations, but clearly cannot make judgments on the basis of press reports alone..."

You can be sure we will continue to monitor this situation.

In the Texas lawsuit, two men who worked as contract agents for the U.S. Customs Service are seeking reimbursement for their expenses because, they claim, they could not get the service to prosecute Ian Smalley, one of Israel's major arms dealers in the early Reagan years. The contract agents claim they were told by customs officials "that if the Israelis were [found] to be in the picture, the entire [Smalley] investigation would be stopped by the State Department." In 1983, when the two persuaded the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms to take action against Mr. Smalley, they say a customs agent showed one of them a CIA message saying "the Israeli government had informed Smalley that they would kill the U.S. Attorney, Gary Howard and Ron Tucker [the two contract agents] to prevent Smalley from going to trial." When Mr. Smalley was ultimately tried, he was acquitted, because, Gary Howard claimed, the Justice Department pulled its punches.

"In the face of scandals that would have brought any normal government down, the U.S. and Israeli governments resorted to deniability (an intelligence term for passing the buck) and they withheld incriminating documents on the grounds of 'national security'."

The Reagan administration also chose not to prosecute two U.S. Army colonels who sold arms to Iran from their U.S. embassy posts in London and Paris beginning in 1983. One of the colonels was partners with Paul Cutler (also known as Sjeklocha), a U.S. arms dealer with close links to Israel, who was convicted in 1985 of trying to smuggle TOW missiles to Iran.

Writing in the New York Times, Seymour Hersh noted the estimate of Henrik Berlau, the president of the Danish Seamen's Union, that, by the end of 1985 (when the Iran-contra affair began), Danish ships manned by his members had carried 600 cargoes of U.S.-made arms from Ellat in Israel to Bandar Abbas, Iran.

The union has gone public about the arms sales, Berlau said in a telephone interview from his Copenhagen office, because it wants to pressure the Danish government to outlaw "black" and "gray" arms shipments. These are dangerous, he explained, because the recipient's enemy may decide to retaliate against the crew.

The value of the weapons shipped is beyond estimation. (One "small" contract Israel closed with Iran in July 1981 was worth \$200 million, according to former Israeli military intelligence officer Shmuel Segev.)

Certainly the sales total is enormously at odds with what the

nation heard in 1987, when Congress held hearings on the Iran-contra affair — a paltry matter of a few plane loads of Hawk and TOW missiles, valued well under \$50 million. The Iran-contra committee neatly finessed the question of what went on in the early 1980s by beginning its investigation in 1984. Intimidated by the intelligence establishment and smitten with Israel, the Congress, which is supposed to serve as the people's eyes and ears on the executive branch of government, grew positively demure when it came to scrutinizing the covert partners.

Henrik Berlau's shrug was audible as he recalled that the Tower Commission, appointed by President Reagan to "investigate" the Iran-contra affair, and the congressional Iran-contra committee ignored the 18 shipments for which the Danish Seamen's Union had provided documentation. Mr. Berlau also recalled that, in late 1986 or early 1987, Israel sent then Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin to Denmark "to persuade our prime minister to shut our mouth."

Many who have investigated or who participated in some of the covert arms sales to Iran say that the Reagan administration's blessing for the Israeli sales came as part of a deal cut during the 1980 election campaign. That deal, known as the October Surprise, is said to have been struck during meetings campaign chairman (and, subsequently, CIA director) William Casey had with Iranian officials in Madrid and Paris in July and October 1980.

In exchange for an open Israeli arms pipeline, Iran is alleged to have delayed the release of U.S. hostages in Tehran until after the November 1980 elections. They were freed on Inauguration Day, January 20, 1981, moments after Ronald Reagan put his hand on a Bible and swore to uphold the Constitution. Some believe the delay in their release cost President Jimmy Carter the election.

A year or so later, Bruce Rappaport, a Geneva-based Israeli and a golfing partner of William Casey, befriended Carter's one-time budget director, Bert Lance. Mr. Rappaport, said Mr. Lance, "made it clear to me he had a close relationship with" the CIA director. After Mr. Rappaport had pursued him socially for some time, Mr. Lance told a Senate committee hearing last year, he asked indirect questions that Mr. Lance said, gave him the impression "that he was interested in if I or anyone around Carter was pursuing the October Surprise."

Mr. Rappaport would later figure in allegations tying Reagan Attorney General Edwin Meese to a proposal to bribe the Israeli Labour Party in connection with a pipeline the Bechtel construction company wanted to build for Iraq across Jordan. (Mr. Rappaport is a major donor to the Labour party.)

Still later, a \$10 million "donation" made by the Sultan of Brunei to the Nicaraguan contras would vanish, then mysteriously reappear in Mr. Rappaport's account at Credit Suisse. Iran-contra inside Maj. Gen. (Ret.) John Singhan said the bank staff was "no accident." Most recently Mr. Rappaport's name has been connected to the scandal-plagued Bank of Credit and Commerce International.

In researching his New York Times article, Seymour Hersh found no link between the gusher

of Israeli arms shipments to Iran and the October Surprise. But Mr. Hersh also wrote: "No American rationale for permitting covert arms sales to Iran could be established."

In April 1991, a public television documentary and a book on the October Surprise by former Carter administration National Security Council official Gary Sick, sparked calls for an investigation from Mr. Carter, from former hostages and from the grass roots.

The house and Senate Democratic leadership responded, if reluctantly, and began organising a formal investigation. Congressional Republicans have opposed the probes with a ferocity that suggests there may indeed be something to hide.

Congressional investigations, with powers to subpoena classified documents, could ferret out the truth about the October Surprise. There is credible circumstantial evidence that a deal was made. PLO official Bassam Abu Sharif, for example, says that after the 1980 Republican convention he met in Beirut with "one of Reagan's closest friends" who "wanted the PLO, to use its influence to delay the release of the American hostages until after the election" and offered in return recognition and an open White House door for the PLO, which, Mr. Abu Sharif said, rejected the approach.

However, the only professed witnesses to the alleged Paris and Madrid meetings are arms dealers and denizens of the covert underworld. Their testimony conflicts on some points and they are easy for the men at the top to discredit and deny.

A key source for Mr. Sick's "October Surprise" — and for many of the revelations about Israeli and U.S. operations during the 1980s to have made the news in the last two years — was Ari Ben-Menashe, a former Israeli military intelligence officer. He is a highly controversial source because he claims to have seen then vice-presidential candidate George Bush attending a meeting with Iranian representatives in Paris in October 1980 and because, while journalists have been able to confirm much of what he says, some of his allegations appear improbable.

Mr. Ben-Menashe claims to have sold arms to Iran under the auspices of the Israeli government and has told of buying weapons for resale to Iran from Poland and North Korea. He claims that in 1986 and 1987 Israeli technicians went to Vietnam to renovate a Hercules C-130 aircraft abandoned there by the U.S. military. He has also made wide-ranging allegations about CIA Director Robert Gates, charging that during 1980s Mr. Gates took a lead role in arming Iraq through South Africa and Chile.

At the same time, Mr. Ben-Menashe says he was present at a meeting in Kansas City, Missouri in July 1987 when Mr. Gates and Iranian Defence Minister Mohammad Hosein Jalali consummated a \$2 billion arms deal. Some of these allegations seem to be consistent with known history, but journalists have been unable to confirm them.

The Israeli government and several major media outlets in this country have made Herculean efforts to discredit Mr. Ben-Menashe, who was acquired by a

(Continued on page 5)

Motorcycles pick up speed in the Gulf

By Christine Hauser
Reuters

ABU DHABI — Fatboys are taking the place of the traditional ships of the desert in the United Arab Emirates. But it's not all easy-riding across the sands of Arabia, where two wheels are now playing the well-worn camel paths.

Women are banned from motor-cycling in all but one of the seven emirates that make up the UAE and demand exceeds supply for many high-powered bikes such as the Harley Davidson Fatboy and Honda, Suzuki or BMW models.

The big bike manufacturers

are finding the UAE a receptive market with local clients willing to spend between 30,000 and 50,000 dirhams (\$8,200-13,600) on a bike and thousands more for fancy customisation.

Even would-be bikers who cannot afford the gleaming dream-machines in the showrooms spend their hard-earned money on accessories such as Harley Davidson key rings, belts or braces.

U.S. manufacturer Harley Davidson Inc. supplied its UAE distributor with 55 motorcycles this year. Showrooms are already empty.

"I've already sold seven of my next shipment of 1993 models," said David Boyko,

manager of Harley Davidson UAE, the biggest motorcycle distributor in the Gulf.

Mr. Boyko said interest in motorcycles is growing among the Arab population in the UAE where leather and chrome are rapidly taking the place of camels.

"More and more, of our clients are locals, mostly the ones who have been educated in the West and are familiar with the image of the Harley rider," Mr. Boyko told Reuters.

The 1969 U.S. film Easy Rider immortalised the image of Harley owners as tough, leather-clad riders who travelled in groups astride their "hogs".

Sales exceeded three mil-

lion dirhams (about \$900,000) in 1991 and Mr. Boyko expects higher revenues for 1992. The bikes are sold faster than the Wisconsin-based manufacturers can deliver them, he said.

The dealership has sold about 100 motorcycles in Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait and the UAE since it opened in 1989.

"It can be a bit strange to see men in leathers ripping past you on the highway," said Michael Wender, who wears a leather Harley cap in Dubai but said he can't afford a motorcycle. "But then again this whole place has been amazingly transformed."

With the billions of dollars of oil earnings each year, per capita income increased and tastes changed.

Jet skis, four-wheel drive vehicles and sleek power boats through the streets and shores of the UAE now.

"The new generation has access to toys their parents wouldn't even dream of when they were young," said Adnan, 24, a Dubai Arab who races power boats.

Like other Gulf Arab countries, the UAE publicly encourages conservative behaviour. But the influx of thousands of foreigners after the oil boom has brought some modifications of the rule.

At weekends in the cooler winter months more and more local Arabs are trading their traditional flowing "dishdasha" robes in favour of full-length leathers to set off into the desert on their motorcycles, one enthusiast said.

Suhail Dalmook, a 32-year-old air force pilot, said he is the leader of a pack of a dozen local men who meet regularly for trips to Ajman and Sharjah, connected to Dubai by long stretches of desert highway.

"Some of us are on Harleys, some are on Japanese bikes," he said.

And local bikers are busy organising an 800 kilometre trip to Salalah in Oman.

Chinese herbs yield surprises

By Heidi Munan

KUCHING, Malaysia — Chlorophyll toothpaste, yoghurt face packs and kefir douches have run their course. The springwater and wild rice diet is passe, and joss sticks are thought to menace the ozone layer. Today's "in" things are Chinese herbs.

The Chinese have known about these herbs for a long time, and they have a word for it: *Expendable*. Any grand-mother from Canton to Ulan Bator will unhesitatingly confirm that if it's cheap, it can't be much good — an argument also put forward by the Western pharmaceutical industry... Does it use Chinese grandmothers as marketing consultants?

But who wants drugs anyway? The consumer of the 1990s has been trained to yearn for the pure, the natural, the environmentally friendly, and herbs seem to be the perfect answer. The word is magic to the modern ear, so much so that few questions are asked about the provenance of the herbs.

As it turns out, a lot of Chinese herbs aren't herbs. They are roots and barks and woodchips, pips and nuts and seed pods, birds' nest and pearls. Rhino horn is sold as a herb, as is dried frog.

According to one herbal pharmacist, cordyceps, called "tong chung cho," is a sort of worm that creeps underground all winter, grows as a limp grass in summer and next fall re-worms itself under the chilly sod. Some herbs!

The warning should be clear. But who can resist a quaint Chinese pharmacy with a stoneware mortar and pestle, a slicing guillotine, baskets of crumbs and chips and petrified grubs drying in the sun? In the dim interior, rows of brown apothecary jars are labelled in Chinese characters and a crabbled Latin hand. One of them reads "Elixir Os Draconis" — Dragon Bone Elixir.

The pharmacist earnestly recommends top-quality, top-price Korean ginseng. Noting that his female customer has a ring on her left hand and no signs of a tummy bulge, he adds confidentially: "Is good for man!" He then shaves thin slices of this air-dried radish and wraps it up with the parting advice: "Cook small!"

The recipe is to simmer the root in a soup with a chicken for two or three hours. Season lightly, taste — and spit! Ginseng is horribly bitter, but most Chinese are far too busy extolling its virtue to mention that. My first-ever ginseng

broth was so bitter that nobody could swallow it. Even the family dog turned up his nose at a generous offer of health soup, though he made off with the chicken in the confusion of the moment. I watched Rover for a while, but he acted the same as usual, sleeping all day and barking all night. I could have fed him cold rice and fish heads for all the good a ginseng-spiked fowl did him.

Once family life has been blessed with the arrival of a baby — with or without the help of ginseng — Chinese herbs crop up again. Rest and good food is not all a young mother gets, especially if there is a strong-minded aunt on the premises. In that case the new mom will be lucky if she escapes kachang-ma. Kachang-ma is a herb rather like twice-chewed grass. It is stewed with chicken, in arrack (local alcohol brew). A cow might get to like it, or an alcoholic... "It's Chinese wine!" says Aunt Lily firmly, "and it's good for you. Eat up while it's hot."

Timidly expressed wishes for something else are met with stony silence. Hunger drives the convalescent mother up and about in record time, mostly on foraging trips to the kitchen. After all, she has a baby to feed. "Strong little feller!" Aunt Lily beams "and you look a picture of health. Just can't beat kachang-ma!"

Kachang-ma is the beginning but by no means the end of family herbal treatment. What won't herbs do for a happy houseful? One concoction cools an overheated boy, another warms a chilled grandmother. One infusion is spooned over and into a tired athlete, another is inhaled by a snuffling urchin. Pots of herb-and-chicken-soup promise good grades in all exams from kindergarten upwards. The chemist down the road from us is doing a good trade out of bumps and bruises, measles, mumps and chicken pox. He is ready to take on anything, from vertigo to night blindness, and would even have a crack at bubonic plague or yellow fever if anybody sought his advice, and

herbs.

My family is unadventurous in its illnesses. As toddlers grow into teenagers they become squeamish. Objections are raised to harmless things like flower petals floating in cooling drinks or stew. Not to mention birds' nest. "These kids don't know what they're talking about," snorts Aunt Lily. Consider her father-in-law. The old gentleman takes birds' nest three times a week and he never coughs!

I never take birds' nest at all, and I don't cough much, myself. Maybe I'm jealous because no daughter-in-law will get up at 3 a.m. to prepare the stuff for me. Birds' nest has to be slowly simmered for three hours. Then the patient is shaken from his slumbers and has the insipid brew, sweetened with rock sugar, poured down his throat. He is by now hawking and spitting — not, however, coughing — and grumbling about being woken up; his vinegary countenance at daybreak gives no clue to a steady diet of rock sugar brew!

Lily's father-in-law is over 80. Slightly younger hopefuls breakfast on birds' nest drink, concentrate, jelly or soup at the crack of dawn, with no thought of curing coughs. An 18th century English trader heard that birds' nest was "counted a great provocative to venery." Such being the case, it simply couldn't be expensive enough.

"What do you understand about it?" Aunt Lily reproves a skeptic. "Birds' nest costs Malaysian dollar 25 an ounce, about \$60. Sixty dollars, you hear! It must be good." The pharmacist sells birds' nests in packs, like pressed dried noodles. Nice harmless-looking stuff... unless you've visited a nesting site. The raw material for Sarawak's finest birds' nest is stuck over the twigs and feathers and the things baby swiftlets get up to. The birds build their homes in caves, a hundred or more feet above the floor; when nests are prised loose with long sticks they fall into the rich deposits of bird and bat guano below.



A young Malaysian pharmacist weighs the ingredients for a prescription of "Chinese herbs", which can be anything from dried frog to bird's nests.

How did birds' nest first get its reputation as a panacea? Who thought of climbing cliffs and cave vaults in search of solidified swiftlet saliva mixed with bird droppings? Was it a man driven up the wall by, ahem, problems? Is a colourless tasteless brew of whatever medicinal properties worth disrupting the privacy of the birds?

This train of thought can be fatal. Rhino horn, actually made of hair, is practically worth its weight in gold because the rhino being fully protected as an endangered species, it's almost impossible to get. But these few pieces in our corner pharmacy — where, how long ago, and in what manner were they obtained? What about rhino

urine, another most powerful remedy? How is it collected? In chamber pots strategically placed all over the jungle?

And how does one catch the baby mice which have to be swallowed whole, with a mouthful of rice spirit, as a tonic for women who fail to regain strength after childbirth and for other cases of anemia? Most patients would manage the rice spirit, but a wriggling, jiggling naked mouse? Half-hatched chicks, also considered excellent as a tonic, are at least not likely to escape.

Consider the technical details involved in producing a flat dried frog and you'll never want that herb again. Not unless it costs at least \$20 per gram — World News Link.

Cooling barley gruel: Chinese herb recipe for summer

Simmer 2 tablespoons of barley in a liter of water; when the barley is cooked and huge, add a tablespoon of candied lemon peel and a few lumps of rock sugar for the last 10 minutes of simmering. Serve as a drink, over shaved ice or once it has cooled in the refrigerator. A red bean gruel can be made along the same lines, but in Malaysia it is served with coconut cream.



The Summer Olympics: 1 to 8,000,000,000

BARCELONA (AP) — Olympics by the numbers:

- 0 — countries boycotting the games.
- 1 — Germany competing.
- 2 — athletes on the teams from Albania, Cook Islands, Mali and Monaco.
- 3 — gold medals won by Spain over the last three summer Olympics.
- 4 — brothers of the Sidak family competing on Malaysia's badminton team.
- 5 — Olympic appearances for British javelin thrower Tessa Sanderson and American runner Frankie Larrien Smith.
- 6 — gold medals each won so far by Carl Lewis and Matt Biondi.
- 7 — consecutive summer Olympics missed by South Africa prior to this year.
- 8 — Olympic teams made by Michael Plumb of the American equestrian team.
- 9 — gold medals awarded on the first medals day (Sunday).

- 10 — gold medals awarded on final day of games.
- 12 — ocean liners in Barcelona for the Olympics.
- 13 — age of Chinese diver Fu Mingxia.
- 25 — official sports at the games.
- 30 — world record-setting pole vaults for Sergei Bubka.
- 52 — countries that won medals at the 1988 Seoul games.
- 63 — wins and 1 loss for Cuban baseball team in past six world events.
- 64 — times of fireworks for opening and closing ceremonies.
- 107 — medals won by the U.S. in one Olympics — Mexico City in 1968.
- 132 — medals won by the Soviet Union at '88 Seoul games.
- 172 — countries in the Olympics.
- 257 — events at the games.
- 627 — medals won previously by American track and field athletes.
- 1492 — when Spain's king and queen sent Columbus in search of spices.

- 1,691 — total medals to be awarded.
- 1,768 — U.S. medals won in all summer games (most of any country).
- 4,000 — seats at badminton arena and baseball stadium.
- 5,000 — taverns in town.
- 9,172 — Spaniards who helped carry the Olympic torch through the country.
- 45,560 — police and soldiers watching over the city.
- 65,000 — seats at Olympic Stadium.
- 693,700 — private cars in Barcelona.
- 2,350,000 — Watts of electricity for opening and closing ceremonies.
- 401,000,000 — dollars paid by American television network NBC for rights fees for the games.
- 920,000,000 — dollars spent on Barcelona's new phone system.
- 1,800,000,000 — dollars spent to refurbish Barcelona's waterfront.
- 8,000,000,000 — dollars spent on refurbishing all of Barcelona.

Book reviews

The intifada on canvass

Faithful Witnesses: Palestinian Children Recreate Their World

By Kamal Boullata
Olive Branch Press, New York 1991, \$19.95

Faithful Witnesses is a collection of paintings by Palestinian children from the occupied territories. Two years in the making, the book is the work of Kamal Boullata, a Palestinian artist and writer. In gathering the pictures between covers, his aim is to be as faithful to the children's art "as they have been to the only world they have known."

In an eloquent commentary that accompanies the illustrations, Boullata describes the desires, beliefs and motivations that make up the child's world. In explaining how children witness the uprising, he explains the uprising itself. "If the small hand that dares to lift a stone against a soldier armed with live ammunition is given a crayon, a brush or a pencil, how will it attack the paper to recreate the world being shaped by the youngest generation?"

The paintings that result depict not only the expected images of dispossession, brutality and death, but equally the moral values of community, identity and love that for so long held the intifada together. As such, we read them not just as human testimonies, but as psychological markers that chart the Palestinian child's road to political socialisation.

In painting after painting, children draw fields where every blade of grass is graced; olive groves where each olive is enumerated; lemon branches where every petal is imbricated. They sketch women not only sowing the land, but wearing the traditional gowns of black and scarlet embroidery. At the same time — in sobering detail — they feel compelled to communicate the reality of Israeli occupation. In Chaining and Blindfolding Everyone in Jalazun Schoolyard by Abdallah Afif, aged 14 — we are shown schoolchildren gagged, chain-ganged and beaten by IDF soldiers armed with machine guns.

As Boullata argues, such pictures demonstrate that Palestinian children paint from both contemporary and ancient experience, interweaving their nation's folklore, history and religion with the immediacy of real events and places. In so doing, they lend their struggle both legitimacy and strategy. If, in the uprising, the stone and sling were reinvented by the child to fend off the occupier, here Palestinian children use the equally primitive means of crayon and water colour to give form to a political culture that, in and through their paintings, becomes their own.

Having been faithful to themselves, whether in recounting the details of everyday life as they live it or in reflecting the cherished dreams of their elders, children through these works transmit, in total humility, a collective vision of the Palestinian people — Middle East International.

Graham Usher

A challenge to orthodoxy

Democratising Development: the role of voluntary organisations

By John Clark
Earthscan, London 1991, £9.95

John Clark's book comes just 11 years after the international commission chaired by Willy Brandt produced its report North-South: A Programme For Survival. The general reaction of the developed countries was to sideline the report and use their hegemony over world resources in a manner which has ravaged the planet and increased both poverty and potential for conflict. As John Clark observes in one of many trenchant sentences in his book, "today's economic orthodoxy is a path not to development but to disaster."

It is against that background that non-governmental organisations are coming to play an ever-increasing role. They are also proliferating, especially in the Third World. Some of them are front organisations of authoritarian governments or undesirable in other ways (a situation not confined to the Third World). It is not only extreme poverty which is the underlying reality. It is also social injustice, illiteracy and the fatalistic view among too many exploited people that theirs is a pre-ordained existence which they have no power to change. John Clark sets out these matters in detail and discusses means whereby the victims can themselves become more democratically involved in solving these global problems.

He summarises NGOs with religious or political motivations as "quasi-NGOs" which simply waste the time of what he considers to be "real" NGOs. In a world of proliferating NGOs, there will inevitably be some dubious ones, but this cavalier throwing out of the baby with the bath water is too dismissive. More so since the author accepts, indeed advocates, that NGOs have to be outspoken on political issues. He also accepts that they must expect harsh reprisals in return for being outspoken.

This is not a book about the Middle East and, in fact, it turns a blind eye towards the Middle East. This is surprising, given the region's importance both as an area for NGO activity and for reprisals against NGOs. In Britain, the Zionist lobby has waged a major campaign to discredit NGOs like Oxfam, Christian Aid and Medical Aid for Palestinians and to try to undermine their status as registered charities. This is because their experience in the field has compelled them to speak out, although in fact pretty cautiously, about the condition of the Palestinians. As for a educational and other charitable NGOs in the field, the Israeli government has long been busy closing them down, misappropriating their resources and arresting their personnel — Middle East International.

David Watkins

A feared but necessary reform in education

The world of schools had been in turmoil for a year. People were worried about the consequences of the "Jospin reform" (named after the Minister of Education), although everybody agrees that the educational system needs to be overhauled.

PARIS — Behind the grumbling of numerous students, teachers and parents lies the great fear of young people: A morrow without a future. It also brings out a major fact of society: The opening up of the upper secondary school and then the university to the great majority whereas previously these had only been accessible to a minority.

In 1985, 45 per cent of people under 20 were students. In 1990, there were 60 per cent. The success rate in the baccalaureat, higher school certificate, has all records. In 1950, one young person in twenty held this certificate. In 1970, it was one in five and, in 1991, one in two. The objective of Minister Lionel Jospin was to "lead 100 per cent of a generation to training and a qualification".

Today, the "Education Nationale" is a complex and impressive machine dispensing knowledge to 13 million

students, which is nearly a quarter of the population. This task falls on the 300,000 primary school teachers and the 350,000 secondary school teachers in the 60,000 primary schools, 5,000 lower secondary schools and 2,600 lycées (offering training up to the baccalaureat).

Together with higher education, administration and technical staff, more than 1,300,000 civil servants depend on the "Education Nationale". (In France, teachers have the status of civil servants).

France has made the education of its citizens "a national priority" and it is devoting a budget of 263 billion francs to this in 1992. In four years, this amount has increased by 50 per cent and 7,000 teaching posts have been created. In the same period, universities took in 280,000 more students and gave out 100,000 extra grants.

University 2,000

The creation of 28 professionalised university institutes has made it possible to double the number of places. With the "University 2,000" plan, 32 billion francs have been devoted, by the state and local authorities, to revamping higher education.

With sky-rocketing figures and a cumbersome mechanism, the French educational system needs to be modernised. Hence "these common sense measures", advocated by the minister in order to foster increased success through a faster course of study while, at the same time, aiming at an equality of chances and respecting the value of diplomas.

He intended to tackle the major problem that universities suffered from: The large scale failure in the DEUG (Diplôme d'Etudes Universitaires Générales) exam taken after the first two years of university studies. Nearly half of the students fail this exam.

The ministerial project proposed:

- To lighten the timetable, to renew the syllabus and to review and extend the different categories of the baccalaureat.

- To close down certain "dead-end" areas of study which acted as "factories for unemployment".

- Better guidance in the study programme through gradual specialisation and the possibility to diverge in the middle of a year.

He also intended to create a corps of "tutors" to give support to small groups of students. Their pedagogical contribution would

come on top of the actual teaching provided by the lecturers.

The "Jospin reform" has caused doubt and uncertainty among some and resistance and nervousness in others. This is because the "Education Nationale" has suffered from too many other reforms in the last quarter of a century. They were announced with a lot of gusto but did not improve or barely improved the system.

Protesters increased their action to fight the minister's projects. They criticised their "make-shift" aspect and the lack of concertation with those concerned.

Mr. Jospin's departure last spring and his replacement by Jack Lang, the popular minister of Culture, has quietened things down. Without calling into question the necessity and the main lines of the reform undertaken, the latter has decided to extend and deepen the indispensable concertation of all those concerned.

The problems remain and it will, indeed, one day prove necessary to bring about changes in the system, but how will it be possible to find democratic solutions with so many different partners with such contradictory interests?

However, a basic consensus does exist allowing for hope. Polls reveal that, of all their institutions, education inspires the most confidence in the French and they are prepared to make many sacrifices for its sake — L'Actualité En France.

Mapmakers rush to join computer age

By Nita Lelyveld
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — It used to be that when the National Geographic Society published a map, it would print at least 80,000 copies. These days, it's more like 5,000.

It's not for lack of interest. If anything, maps are more popular now than ever. But what's the point of printing tens of thousands when they could be out of date almost instantly?

"Cartographers as a rule enjoyed a very stable time period in the 1980s, but now we're getting used to change," said John F. Shupe, the Society's chief cartographer. "Our maps are accurate the day we print them, but they may not last long after that."

Since Germany unified and the Soviet Union broke up, mapmakers have grown used to constantly revising their work. But revisions still don't come easily.

Many of the Society's maps still are drawn and plotted manually. And the Society's distinct typeface must still be positioned on each map by hand for each place name — each river, city, town and mountain range.

Automating the process of mapmaking is extremely expensive. But computers are

gaining ground. New maps at the Society are digitally scanned, with details converted into digital form. That information is fed into a colour graphics computer, which creates lines on the maps, the map symbols and colour patterns. A laser printer then imprints the maps onto film, which is converted to plates for colour printing.

But the process of making a map still can take months and dozens of cartographers. And computers can't solve all of today's mapmaking problems.

Take the index in an atlas. If a country simply changes its name, a computer can replace the old name with the new at the touch of a button, said Mr. Shupe. But that can't be done when one country becomes 15 — as in the case of the Soviet Union, he said.

Even computerisation is time consuming, said Dr. Michael Dobson, chief cartographer at Rand McNally in Skokie, Illinois. The first large step toward automation

is the creation of a computer database, or information storehouse, for a country or region, he said.

To put together a U.S. database, Rand McNally cartographers spent about 3 1/2 years creating what was, in essence, a large-scale map of the country. It reproduces all the states on the same scale and with the same level of detail.

"One of the problems with individual maps is that frequently, if you go from one map to another, you won't find the same amount of detail, and you may not have the same type of content," Mr. Dobson said. "In some states, you have a great deal of unpaved roadway. But if you're making a general-purpose highway map, you may not include it. Maps differ depending on why they were made."

Once the details are stored in a computer, any number of things become possible, Mr. Dobson said.

"You can decide to make a map that shows one particu-

lar highway from start to finish, or you can make a map of a group of states," he said. "You can extract what you want from the database."

Rand McNally is using its U.S. database to create its 1993 road atlas, and is at work on a database of Europe. Hammond Inc. of Maplewood, New Jersey, used a similar system for its world atlas due out this fall, said spokeswoman Gwen Baker. And the National Geographic Society is also busy building databases.

But change takes time, and mapmakers everywhere have spent the last two years hoping that political transformations will coincide with their production deadlines.

The National Geographic Society plans to print a new map of Europe in October. But what will have become of Yugoslavia? And will Czechoslovakia be two countries instead of one?

Already, the Society's mapmakers have created a tentative map that divides Czechoslovakia into the Czech Republic and Slovakia. But if a split isn't formalised until a week after the map is printed and the names are different, the cartographers won't be surprised.

"It's kind of the way we're living right now," said Mr. Shupe.

Moscow's homeless lose their only shelter

By Fiona Fleck
Reuters

MOSCOW — On the vast concrete periphery of Moscow, a group of the capital's thousands of down-and-outs stood queuing in the hope of a bed for the night.

This is — or was — Moscow's first shelter for the homeless.

It was set up in June in the isolation ward of a hostel for psychiatric patients. Just three weeks later, the hostel's head doctor closed the shelter, saying he needed it back.

None of the night visitors seemed convinced by reassurances that the shelter was an experiment, and that as a result more hostels would open for dozens, even hundreds more homeless.

"Why did they bother to open it at all?" said Aleksandr, 38. "I don't know where I will sleep tomorrow. They are making a mockery of us."

"It's hard enough to find food without having to start

all over again looking for a place to sleep."

Of the 12 allowed to sleep in the shelter each night, some were selected by doctors from the countless homeless who sleep rough in railway stations in winter and in parks, lawns and woods in summer.

The rest were admitted on a first come, first served basis.

As they charged through the door at eight o'clock sharp, a militia man stood by to keep law and order.

Not that any of them looked like the familiar alcoholics or brawlers who inhabit Moscow's twilight zone.

All, without exception, were victims of the outmoded "propiska" (residence permit) system, most without family or friends to help them get on their feet.

If you don't have a propiska to live in a Russian city it is illegal to work there and you have no right to accommodation. The government

has pledged to scrap the system.

Many of the night visitors, whose ages ranged from 30 to 70, had emerged from years of hard labour in penal camps.

Some had "done time", as they put it, in psychiatric hospitals.

Others had fallen on hard times and were denied state pensions through some bureaucratic hitch.

Inside, as the small crowd huddled together queuing for lice shampoo, Nikolai, a 52-year-old machine repairman, said:

"Look at these people. They are in a state of nerves because they've lived in the railway stations for too long."

"The police aren't allowed to put us away anymore, but they continue to pester us and move us on all the time. We are exiles in our own country — it's a violation of human rights."

With hopes dashed of a bed with clean sheets and a roof over their heads, some

planned to go back to the stations, others refused to contemplate where they would end up.

Aleksei Aleksandrov, 33, a former factory worker, said he refused to sleep on the streets.

He had just been released from a penal colony and until now had managed to find friends to put him up.

"I'm the kind of person who will walk and walk all night rather than lie in the street."

On hearing that the shelter was to close, Valery, 52, who had made the shelter his nightly home since it opened, burst out: "How can we be expected to break out of this vicious circle?"

"All we want is to live well. We are reduced to living like animals and we become like animals."

"It's only when people live well that they can begin to treat one another well. Beggers can't be generous people."

Paradise Lost

By E. Yaghi

In the land of the wild honeysuckle where fires of freedom burn in the hearts of the brave and songs of liberty flow in the minds of the free, dwells a humble nobleman by the name of Sharif. At one time, Sharif sold falafel near the outskirts of an ancient city in the forgotten country of "Paradise Lost". For many years he had been denied all means of obtaining an education by the Israeli oppressors who shut universities and occupied his ancestral home, so he sold falafel. Habitually, near the side of the road he placed his stand under the shade of an old cedar tree which spread its branches out as a partial cover from the boiling sun. Every day Sharif would rise at the flush of dawn, just when pink tinged the purple complexion of the infant day, gather his equipment and head for the peripheries of "Paradise Lost". Early mornings brought the scent of wild honeysuckle and jasmine, when the city was yet cuddled under the fading protective quilt of night. Wild pinkish-brown doves and keen-eyed hawks fought for survival in the stillness of the new day as Sharif plodded to his customary tree and set up his stand. One particular morning, Sharif was feeling especially depressed. His people were incessantly dying under a purge of hate. No one was spared death or injury from speechless babe to the elderly. The prospect of peace had become merely a phantom for dreamers. As he readied his wares he said to the winds which were emancipated, "I can hear the chains of slavery rattling in the doom of bondage. When will the bonds be broken and my people be free? Oh Lord, give us strength and patience to bear our enslavement!"

Soon, the crisp tantalising smell of falafel rose to greet the first morning scents of flowers and leaves devoid yet of the exhausts of thick smoke that puffed out of the bottoms of cars and buses. The first customers were small children who rubbed the sleep from their eyes as they waited for their favourite food. "Good morning, Uncle," a small voice piped out, "please give me ten falafel." Whereupon the hand behind the voice pushed the brown coins towards the vendor.

"Well, good morning Laith, my favourite customer. What have you got up your sleeve today that makes you look in such a hurry?"

He saw the excitement in the young boy's eyes as the child exclaimed with enthusiasm, "Oh, Uncle Sharif, I'm making a beautiful kite and today I shall finish it! In the afternoon I will bring it here to show it to you. It's going to be a big surprise!"

Sharif chuckled as he watched Laith run off towards his home, remembering with nostalgia those carefree boyish days not long ago when he himself had designed and proudly flew his own kites. The rest of his morning passed as usual and when the sun climbed high in the pallid sky and business ground to a crawl, Sharif gathered his goods, packed them neatly together and headed for his mid-day break to wait for the cool of afternoon. As he walked, lines of cars divulged themselves into the city as their black fumes and blaring horns polluted the ancient atmosphere that had witnessed countless civilisations and forgotten empires in the place that Sharif had always known as home, the home of his ancestors from time immortal. A lone wild dove glided through the mid-day heat and then landed on a protruding television antenna on a nearby house. "Wonder what he's doing out in the hot sun? He should have more sense and take refuge like me from the heat," Sharif said smiling to himself as he crossed the threshold of his small

one room hut and threw his equipment down on the floor and then himself as well.

"It's so hot. I think I'll sleep for a while." And soon he clasped into a deep slumber.

Much later, cool winds blew in from the Mediterranean and Sharif once more packed his goods and headed for his cedar tree. "I feel much better now, in fact, quite refreshed. At least I'll have the strength to last until late evening," he said as he trudged along.

Again he set up his stand and soon the hot oil in which he tried the falafel popped in anticipation of feeding his hungry. Not long after, Laith approached, tugging his new kite. "Look, uncle! Do you see how beautiful my kite is?"

Sharif looked at the boy's efforts and let out a low whistle. "Yes indeed, it is beautiful Laith. You must have spent hours working on it, but, I see your kite is made like the Palestinian flag. You know how dangerous this can be. If the Israelis see it, you will be in big trouble!"

"Don't worry! I'm going to fly the colours of Palestine way up in the sky where everyone can see them. If the Israelis destroy my kite, I shall make a new one and if that gets ruined, then another!" the boy proclaimed.

Sharif heard the determination in the young voice and saw courage flash in the boy's eyes, but he knew that courage was no match for brutal authority. "You must be careful. You don't want the soldiers to catch you. To them, there is no such thing as a Palestinian child and they will show you no mercy!"

Apparently undaunted, the child boasted, "But Uncle Sharif, I can run very fast!" and without waiting for any more advice, he tore off down the street and disappeared. Sharif lost sight of Laith, but then he saw the kite flutter high above the city as the winds carried it to dive and dip and sweep across the heavens as red, green and white streamers flapped freely in the air. "It looks so regal," Sharif whispered in awe. His heart beat with pride. He looked around and saw clusters of people stop and point at the marvel. He searched for the boy and saw him at a distance on top of a tall building commanding the kite with gentle jerks and tugs. All of a sudden, an Israeli jeep broke the silence of victory and some soldiers shouted at Laith. The boy let go of his prize and fled like lightning. At first, the kite hovered about but then without its pilot, dived down and then plummeted to earth, catching itself on some electricity wires. The soldiers ran over to where Sharif stood watching and one roughly shouted, "Hey, you there! Come and get that damn kite off those wires. Get a move on it!"

While he spoke, he grabbed Sharif by his collar and threw him down in front of him. One soldier kicked him. Another slapped him. A third punched him in his stomach. They laughed and cursed him. One spit on him. Humiliated, Sharif wiped the spittle off and slowly walked toward the electricity pole and began to climb. "Hurry up, you dog! Get that kite down or we'll shoot you!" one soldier barked.

So he climbed up even further and reached and reached out to where the kite was tied between two wires. He must not have been thinking. He grabbed the wrong wire and let out a wild scream. The next thing he knew, he was in a hospital with stumps where his hands and lower arms had been. Now Sharif sits alone in his small hut with artificial limbs that do him little good. He has no way to sell falafel and make a living any more. Sometimes he sighs and says to himself: "God will not suffer us to perish for we have fought so bravely and earnestly for liberty. But, as long as we are in chains, then no Arab nation and no Arab citizen shall truly be free!"

JTV CHANNEL 2 WEEKLY PREVIEW

Thursday, July 30

8:30 The Simpsons

9:10 Civil Wars

New Series

10:00 News In English

10:20 Olympics

Friday, July 31

8:30 Olympics

Swimming

9:30 Please Don't Eat The Daisies

Look Who's Talking

Is Mr's Nash pregnant?

10:00 News In English

10:20 Olympic Live

Gymnastics

11:00 Thatcher

A political drama about the fall of Margaret Thatcher after winning 3 successive elections.

12:00 Olympics

Summary

Saturday, Aug. 1

8:30 Super Bloopers

9:00 Olympics

10:00 News In English

10:20 French Feature Film

Les Camassies

Starring: Jean Carmet and Wedeck Stanzake



Close To Home Monday at 8:30

A boxer comes under pressure from international organisers of boxing matches and bets.

12:00 Olympics Roundup

Sunday, Aug. 2

8:30 Wings

A Terminal Christmas. Faye, the reservation clerk, is a widow spending Christmas alone, her colleagues try to cheer her up.

9:00 Olympics

10:00 News In English

10:20 Olympics

Monday, Aug. 3

8:30 Close To Home

Guess Who's Coming To Dinner

Dr. James has a date with three ladies at the same time

9:00 Olympics

10:00 News In English

10:20 Olympics

Tuesday, Aug. 4

Three skips and a Joey

A pregnant Australian woman comes to the restaurant. Elizabeth gets surprised when

she knows that the father of the child is Kerin.

9:00 Olympics

10:00 News In English

10:20 Oscar Film

An Ideal Husband

Starring: Penelope Guinness

12:00 Olympics

Wednesday, Aug. 5

8:30 Saved By The Bell

How to solve the problems of Husbands and wives.

9:00 Wednesday Forum

10:00 News In English

10:20 Olympics

Gamil Rateb goes back to his roots

By Katia Sabet

CAIRO — In Egypt, he made his name in cinema and television by playing roles that were so unpopular most other actors would not touch them. Egyptian audiences and movie-goers throughout the Middle East love him for his portrayal of the villain, yet in France, Gamil Rateb is known for his talent as a serious stage actor. He has walked the boards of all the best-known theatres in Paris and spent 30 years of his career doing so. In fact, Rateb was 50 before he began working for the big screen in his native Egypt. He speaks French as well as he speaks Arabic and, by his own admission, he knows France better than he knows his own country.

Gamil Rateb, now 65, is not an easy man to understand. His life and long career have been pitted with contradictions. It started at an early age. As a child, the son of a wealthy Egyptian land-owning family, Rateb was made to attend an ordinary state school, while all his friends were sent to private French or English language colleges run by the Jesuit priests. His father, Abou Bakr Rateb Pacha was an ardent nationalist who was determined his son should be a true Egyptian, in language and in spirit.

"My father and his younger brother Ali were among the leading activists at the university at the time of the 1919 revolt against British imperialism," said Rateb. "My uncle Ali was even put in prison. The revolutionary spirit was also present on my mother's side. She was the great-niece of Hoda Charaoui, who was the spokes-

woman for the feminist movement in the first quarter of the century."

But if Rateb's unusual upbringing opened up new horizons and perspectives, it did little to help him fit into mainstream society. Not only was he set apart from his peers, he was also dominated by the women in his family, two sisters and an overbearing mother, who had divorced his father and remarried. As a result the young Gamil suffered from a shyness that was almost crippling. "I was an extremely timid child, so introverted that I seemed almost stupid," he recalls in an exclusive interview. "My schoolmasters were at their wits' end."

Like many shy people, Rateb discovered that the best cure was to go on stage. "It was the best way of imposing myself, of getting people to listen to me," he said. "Getting up on stage, speaking through a character — and being listened to — that gave me a reason for living." Rateb's first forays into the world of acting came while he was still at school. He pursued his new hobby with a passion, his good looks and pleasing manner often helping to land him the leading juvenile role in plays being staged by amateur troupes. World War II was in full spate and foreign touring companies no longer came to Cairo, leaving the field wide open for the less sophisticated but highly enthusiastic local actors.

In 1943, at the age of 17, Rateb made his professional debut in a play being staged at Cairo's Esbekieh Theatre by the great French actress Lucienne Lemarchand, who died recently. The role was for a young adolescent,

hopelessly in love with the heroine. Rateb fitted the bill perfectly and his performance was a hit. Lemarchand predicted a glittering career for him.

But there was trouble in store. Rateb's family had given their consent to his first professional role, convinced this passion for the theatre was a passing phase. But when a friend landed Rateb a part in a movie, their attitude changed abruptly. Rateb's stepfather, who happened to be the director of Egypt's Misr film studios used his influence to ensure that the movie — called "The Three Fiances" — was not given a license until all the scenes featuring Rateb were cut. Soon afterwards, Rateb found that the doors of all Cairo's movie-studios were closed to him.

Freedom

In those days, studying in Europe or the United States was a must for any young well-born Egyptian male. Rateb's mother and stepfather decided that a spell in the French capital would clear the youth's head of foolish theatre talk and launch him on the path to a safe and respectable career. But for Rateb, Paris meant freedom and the chance to learn acting without hindrance from his family.

He enrolled at the Sorbonne University to study law, but was soon skipping classes to take acting lessons at the Paris stage school of Le Vieux Colombier. He missed his law end-of-year exams altogether to try for the entrance exams, which would gain him admission to the Vieux Colombier to study full-time. There Rateb was

successful, but his family was enraged. First they stopped sending him money. Then, when Rateb showed no signs of giving in, they cut him off without a cent.

But Rateb was having the time of his life. By his second year he had already obtained a part in a Shakespeare play. Soon afterwards, he formed a small company, choosing the most promising actors and actresses among his fellow students. "We played in small halls and we shared the box-office receipts, which were never enough to make a living out of," he said. "In order to make ends meet, we had to take other jobs in our spare time." At various times, Rateb worked as a porter at Paris' Les Halles market, as a barman, translator, dubber and walk-on extra, anything to earn enough so that he could continue to do the thing he loved best while he waited for a big break.

That break took its time in coming. The Paris theatre world is highly competitive, but Rateb's patience was rewarded when he found himself more and more in demand for roles in top quality plays, working alongside famous directors and star actors and actresses. "I worked a great deal, always in quality theatre and with actors of a certain caliber," he said. "I never made any effort to break into the movies. To my mind, the cinema has a side that is very artificial and commercial and the environment is one that I find tainted. One has to make compromises and that's not in my nature."

But like it or not, the cinema drew him. After 30 years in Paris, Rateb decided to give himself a six-month

break and return to Egypt so he could put his affairs in order. Launching a new career, this time in Arabic, was the last thing on his mind. However, urged by a friend, Rateb accepted the leading role in an adaptation by Egyptian director Mahmoud Diab of the Swiss playwright Durrenmatt's *Old Lady's Visit*. Rateb was a hit and he soon found himself caught up playing a series of parts in movies and on television.

A favourite of viewers

In spite of his misgivings about the celluloid screen, Rateb became a favourite of Middle East viewers, and he found himself spending more and more time in Egypt. "My return to Egypt was a great turning point in my life," he noted. "When I left for France, I didn't know Egypt. I only knew the place where I had been born. When I arrived in France in 1946 I told myself that this was where I was going to make my home. And that is where I lived, without a break, from the age of 20 to 50. Thirty years is a long time in any man's life. Now, I'm discovering my country. I'm getting to know my people."

Rateb is married to the French actress-turned-theatre director Monique Montviver. But the couple live apart, their careers having taken them down different paths. "My wife and I are still linked by ties of great mutual esteem and friendship, even though we have not lived together for a long time now," he said. "I think marriage works when two individuals complement each other and become one whole. We are both too indi-



After 30 years in Paris as a successful stage actor, Gamil Rateb has embarked on a movie career that has brought him international acclaim.

vidualistic and too self-sufficient, too caught up in our own respective careers to have been able to blend together, to become one. The entire time we were living together, we never spent a single vacation or even a weekend in each other's company. For whole stretches at a time, we didn't even see each other." Has Gamil Rateb ever known real love? On his return to Egypt, there was a woman who meant a great deal in his life, he admits. But knowing that he could not offer her what he felt she deserved — a real marriage, a life together — he decided to break off the relationship.

As for professional plans, Rateb has no intention of resting on his laurels. He is considering new beginnings and is refreshingly self-critical for an actor of his caliber and acclaim. He says he wants to do less of the kind of

movie and television work that brought him fame in the Arab World, and more in the way of taxing roles, such as the one which won him the prize for best male leading actor in the recent Mediterranean Cinema Festival at Bastia in Corsica. The movie which won him recognition was *Chich Khan*, a Franco-Tunisian production directed by M. O. M. M. B. N. Mahmoud.

"As an actor, I need to stretch myself more," he said. "I could carry on as I am for the rest of my career and live very well, but that is not enough. I need to work with people who have a different way of looking at acting. The movie I made in Tunisia made me question a lot of things... I need to start over again if I want to progress as an actor. The fact that I have paradoxically become a very well known movie actor thanks to the television and cinema has made me forget

that my real job is on the stage."

Another challenge for Gamil Rateb is that Egypt is not fertile ground for the theatre, he says. "The theatre in Egypt is dead; and it isn't dead because of a lack of audiences wanting to see plays but because the products being presented are aimed at a minority of well-to-do theatrical illiterates who are the only ones able to afford the exorbitant price of the tickets."

In October, Rateb will produce a play he hopes will appeal to a wider audience, *Children Of Anger And Love* by Samir Khafagha. Then, in spite of his commitments in Cairo, he will return to his much-loved Paris to act in Durrenmatt's play *The Doctors*. Rateb has dozens more scripts and ideas in the pipeline. But from now on, he says, the roles he will go for will be the really challenging ones — World News Link.

Disney movie to focus on Bushmen's skills

By Angus Shaw
The Associated Press

SHAMVA, Zimbabwe — When Eva Monley worked on the movie classic *The African Queen* in 1951, many Westerners viewed Africa as romantic, exotic and pristine.

More than four decades later, the British movie producer has returned to a more troubled continent to make an adventure film highlighting conservation and the

vanishing culture of the once prominent Bushmen tribe.

The Walt Disney movie, *A Far Off Place*, tells how a primitive young Bushman tracker leads two American children through the African wilderness after their parents have been killed by elephant poachers.

Based on books by South African conservationist and philosopher Laurens Van Der Post, it is aimed at family audiences.

"It's an enormously stormy

continent at the moment," Monley said of Africa's wars, famines and economic problems. "But amidst it all there is hope to be found."

Monley, raised in Kenya, said Africa still holds the same lure as when she was a young assistant working on *The African Queen*, which starred Humphrey Bogart and Katharine Hepburn battling through the steamy rain forests of Central Africa.

"With all the troubles, you

can't mess with the African sunrise," she said.

Despite the Bushmen's survival skills in the wild, only a few hundred still lead the nomadic life of their ancestors, who roamed southern Africa for 30,000 years, said Namibian rancher Reinhard Friederich, a leading authority on Bushman lore who is advising Monley.

Another 50,000 Bushmen have been absorbed into modern life, mostly in southern Africa's poorer,

most inhospitable regions. Most are unskilled labourers, and many are plagued by alcoholism and other problems as they try to adapt to change.

According to Friederich, the nomadic Bushman is likely to disappear within 20 years.

"His peace-loving nature is to avoid confrontation. Stronger forces have destroyed him," Friederich said. Los Angeles-based co-pro-

ducer Elaine Sperber said the Disney movie seeks to capture "the symbiotic relationship that human beings can have with nature" at a time of unprecedented concern for the environment.

In the movie, Australian actor Jack Thompson portrays the head of an ivory smuggling cartel responsible for marketing tusks. The movie also stars Maximilian Schell as a white hunter turned conservationist.

Opera in Singapore — the medium is the message

By Peter Bohan
Reuter

SINGAPORE — Under the stars on a downtown stage, surrounded by skyscrapers, the two young maidens delicately meet — and break the sound barrier.

Another Wayang, or Chinese opera, has opened on a Singapore street.

As clouds of incense waft from the nearby Seng Ong Beo Temple, the Teochew troupers keep their small but dedicated audience, most looking up from their plates at the temple restaurant, fixated by the spectacle before them.

The stage, a proscenium on stilts, is the centre of action for the next few hours as scenes filled with jewelled costumes and earnest mime frame the actors' vocal exertions — arias pitched in a sonic universe few Western ears can appreciate.

The onlookers, including occasional cyclists, taxi drivers and passing pedestrians, care not a bit. The magic of the whining Chinese strings, the clanging cymbals, the clattering wooden blocks is carrying the day.

Such scenes — this one was to celebrate the birthday of a city God at the temple — are played out often in Singapore, where three-quarters of the 2.7 million citizens are Chinese.

The question is: Played

often enough, or too often?

Singapore plays host to 3,000 foreign companies and 300,000 foreign guests. English is the language of courts and commerce on the tiny Westernised island, where the government has struggled for years with the challenge of maintaining the cultural heritage of Chinese, Malay, Indian and other groups.

After a period of swift industrialisation in the past two decades, when cultural differences were subordinate to the primary goal of modernisation, the government in recent years has changed its tune. Variety is now the spice of life.

"If all the ethnic cultures in Singapore are inclusive in the basic approach, we will be able to rejoice in our diversity without this cultural diversity undermining our national unity," George Yeo, who heads the Ministry of Arts and Information (MITA), said recently.

In practical terms, MITA and other local bodies are stepping up what have been lonely private efforts to revive traditional Chinese, Malay and Tamil theatre and dance.

"Besides being a part of our multicultural heritage, Chinese opera is a popular form of public entertainment with an educational element," said Foo Meng Liang, executive director of the National Arts Council.

"The opera stories convey social and moral values we would like to instil in our people — for example, filial piety and patriotism."

Opera buffs agree that those values are there, but they are unsure who is listening.

"When it comes down to paying customers, there are really only two or three thousand people you can count on," said Joanna Wong, who founded the island's best-known Cantonese troupe, the Chinese Theatre Circle, in 1981.

"There's a longstanding stigma that opera is for grandmothers. We don't seem to be able to get to the younger generation."

Pitt Kuan Wah, who supervised a two-year project on Singapore's 150-year-old history of Chinese opera troupes for a national archives exhibit in 1988, also lacks optimism.

"I think opera is probably dying because of 'sing-song'." Mr. Pitt said, referring to the popular song concerts now more in favour among temple managers for their festival draws.

A review of performance licences for 1987-88 showed that a Wayang performance, amateur or professional, was held on every day of the year in Singapore, Mr. Pitt said. "Probably less than half of those are now actually Wayang. A lot of it is people who are caught up in



Taking advantage of a break between scenes in a "Teo-chew," a

Singaporean actress reads the gossip section of a local newspaper backstage.

Karaoke."

Ms. Wong said the language barrier was a factor with Singapore youth — Wayang are performed in not just Mandarin but Hokkien, Teochew, Hainanese, Cantonese and other dialects. But lack of extracurricular time for students also cut interest, she said.

And the problems of financing were always present.

"There are no professionalists: They'd die of starvation," Ms. Wong said. "MITA gives grants, but of course they have to spread it to all our cultural groups. There's just one piece of cake, and it has to be shared."

But, with the government's blessing, opera diehards should continue spreading both the medium and the

message of Wayang.

Ms. Wong organised a two-week Cantonese opera festival in April, featuring headline Hong Kong stars. And many opera performances were held island-wide in June during a month-long festival of Chinese culture.

"We are much, much better off now than we were 20 years ago," Ms. Wong said. "You've got to be realistic about it."

Hit Japanese TV show has woman suffering in society

By Yuri Kageyama
The Associated Press

time the series concludes this fall.

TOKYO — Tamako, drawn and pale in a hospital where she is being treated for stress, has just had her dream of running the family inn's new annex squashed by her evil stepdaughter. Gritting her teeth, she begins to weep: "That inn is my life. I can't let them take it away from me."

So went a typical scene of *Women Gotta Have Guts*, the blockbuster soap opera that chronicles the never-ending abuse heaped upon the petite heroine by her nasty in-laws.

The show's heart-wrenching probe of family ties and idolisation of the persevering Tamako is striking a resonant chord in this society in which female servitude and oppressive filial relationships remain the rule.

Court figures show about one-sixth of couples seeking divorce cite conflicts with in-laws as a reason for breaking up. Feuds between bride and mother-in-law have long inspired plays, books and other TV hits before *Women Gotta Have Guts*.

The daily soap, which began in April, is already the top show in Tokyo and the surrounding area. About 40 per cent of 13 million households tune in the 15-minute segments each morning, and unknown others watch the daily afternoon rerun, according to video research, a private ratings firm.

Kinu Ebina, 71, feels a kinship with Tamako. "I identify with shows that have a woman struggling on her own," she said.

"Something's wrong if the story doesn't have a happy ending. Tamako is so hard-working she is bound to succeed," she adds.

Not to worry, says the Japan Broadcasting Corporation that airs the show. Tamako will triumph by the

The network's daytime-soap-opera series, which dates back 30 years, scored an immense hit with a similar theme in 1984 with *Oshin*, the name of a hard-luck little girl who was fated to have creepy in-laws, too.

In *Women Gotta Have Guts*, Tamako, a 40ish Japanese Cinderella, marries an elderly widower, Seitaro, and becomes entangled in a complex web of power struggles and petty jealousies. A troublesome trio are responsible for most of her tribulations.

Seitaro's sister, Aya, believes Tamako is after the family money and makes infrequent but ominous appearances on the show like a dowager empress.

Yoshie, an acid-tongued woman who works at Seitaro's high-class inn, is secretly in love with him. The overweight but light-headed Tatsuko, who is Seitaro's daughter by a previous marriage, treats Tamako as a maid. She flits through the show in expensive kimono, while Tamako keeps her virtuous angst-laden silence, her lips quivering in close-ups.

Tatsuro Ogawa, the programme's chief director, says the scripts typically have the villainesses conniving behind Tamako's back, leading to climactic sequences in which they subject her to psychological sadism.

The abuse is what keeps people glued to their sets, and the three women often steal the show "like monsters in an adventure story," Ogawa says.

It's not unlike the fascination that J.R. Ewing evoked for years on *Dallas*.

"It's a type of thrill to watch the heroine get picked on," says Yukiyo Yoneyama, a 33-year-old housewife. "We can't go on unless there's an outlet for our frustrations."

Multiple birth rates exploding, straining parents and public budgets

By Brenda C. Coleman

The Associated Press
CHICAGO — Fertility drugs are contributing to an explosion of multiple births and the boom is carrying a high price — more tiny babies who need intensive medical care, according to a government study.

The new federal study found that from 1972 to 1989 triplet births rose 156 per cent; quadruplet births zoomed 356 per cent; and quintuplets and greater-number sets rose 182 per cent among white U.S. women.

Among blacks, the in-

creases were smaller — ranging from 18 per cent for triplets to 126 per cent for quadruplets — probably because relatively fewer blacks can afford costly infertility treatment, researchers said.

The study excluded twins because they are to be covered in another report, said epidemiologists and co-author John L. Kiely of the National Centre for Health Statistics in Hyattsville, Maryland. But previous research indicates twins' birth rate rose 33 per cent from 1978 to 1988.

"The good news is that,

over time, the infant mortality rate in higher-order multiple births (triplets and up) has decreased ... at about the same rate as among single births — 50 per cent," Dr. Kiely said.

In 1960, multiple-birth white infants died at a rate of 270 per 1,000, and in 1985 the death rate had dropped to 130 per 1,000. Among blacks, it dropped from 384 per 1,000 to 225 over the same interval.

The bad news is that the multiple-birth-rate boom and lower death rates have created a much greater need for medical and social services

for infants and their families. Dr. Kiely and his team concluded.

Multiple-birth infants have elevated chances of being born prematurely and at low weight, the two best predictors of death and illness in infants.

While only 10.3 of every 1,000 single-born infants weighed less than 3.3 pounds in 1988, 98.7 of every 1,000 twins were that small and 336.3 of every triplets were, said a study last year by Dr. Barbara Luke of Rush Medical College.

Intensive care can pull

many preemies to health, but others will face life handicapped, said her co-author and husband, Dr. Louis Keith, a professor of obstetrics and gynecology at Northwestern University Medical School.

Another study last year found that every baby born into a set of quadruplets ran up an average of \$105,000 in intensive care bills, vs. \$60,045 for every triplet, \$8,336 for every twin and \$3,600 for each single baby.

The study was based partly on data going back to 1981, and the amounts today probably would be double, said

Dr. Keith. Quints were not included, but they often require intensive care similar to quads.

Forty U.S. babies — black and white — were born as quintuplets in 1989, compared with an average of 11 a year in the early 1970s, Dr. Kiely said.

Dr. Kiely and his team reported in their study, published in the July issue of the American journal of Diseases of Children.

In 1989, 225 babies were members of quadruplets, up from an average 42 annually in the early 1970s. And 2,473 were members of triplets in

1989 compared with 873 a year in the early 1970s, the study said.

A total of 90,118 twins were born in 1989, Dr. Kiely said.

White increased use of fertility drugs is responsible for most of the boom, a greater tendency to put off parenthood accounts for about 20 per cent of the trend, Dr. Kiely said.

Doctors have long known that the older the mother, the greater her likelihood of bearing multiple babies, even if she does not take fertility drugs, noted Patricia Malm-

strom, director of Twin Services, a non-profit education and social services agency based in Berkeley, California.

Multiple-birth families need far more medical, social and financial help, ranging from longer maternity leaves to organized support networks, she said.

"Current programmes are often limited to families of children with disabilities or to victims of abuse," she said. "We see families on a steep slide, just kind of down into, really, poverty, when they just need a little leg up."

AIDS success converts critics of Dutch drugs policy

By Cynthia Osterman
Reuter

AMSTERDAM — A dazed and scruffy man drops two dirty syringes into a plastic box. Marianne Groen checks the needles are intact and then hands over fresh replacements.

"Here you go. Need any alcohol wipes?" she asks. The man, one of Amsterdam's 6,000 heroin addicts, declines the sterile tissues and is gone within seconds.

"We're not here to tell them to quit or to moralise," says Groen, coordinator of

the Netherlands' biggest needle exchange programme.

"At first people, especially abroad, didn't understand. Now they see our success in stopping the spread of AIDS among addicts and their opinion has changed."

Often accused of being too soft on drugs, the Dutch are now winning converts to their pragmatic approach, which treats addiction as a medical problem rather than a crime.

Cities around the world are adopting practices such as free methadone treatment and needle exchanges that were pioneered in Amster-

dam, once labelled Europe's drugs centre.

Dutch drugs initiatives are being highlighted at the World AIDS Conference in Amsterdam.

The Netherlands has been able to slow the spread of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) among addicts by giving them clean needles and a range of other services intended to improve health and living standards.

While about a third of European and nearly a quarter of American AIDS patients were infected by dirty needles, fewer than one in 10 Dutch AIDS victims caught

the disease this way.

"Foreigners used to say we were too permissive, that we encouraged drug use. There is now an appreciation of what we are doing and that is largely because of AIDS," says Jaap Fransman of the Amsterdam Health Authority.

Since Amsterdam started the first needle exchange in 1984, similar programmes have begun in cities ranging from San Francisco to Sydney and even Kathmandu.

Amsterdam's scheme to use buses to deliver methadone, a heroin substitute, to

addicts is also catching on elsewhere.

More significantly, many cities are warming to the liberal philosophy behind the Dutch policy, experts say.

"People are going to use drugs. It's a fact of life," says Eddy Engelsman, the Health Ministry official who helped design the policy two decades ago.

"Our method is about containing and encircling problems, instead of pushing them to the fringes of society."

While all drugs are officially illegal in the Netherlands, special "coffee shops" are

allowed to sell small quantities of hashish and Marijuana. Dutch police do not prosecute drug users but concentrate on dealers instead.

The Dutch seek to keep young people who experiment with drugs away from crime and dealers who would encourage them to graduate from soft drugs to more dangerous narcotics.

Permissiveness is coupled with a social safety net of programmes offering health care, financial assistance, counselling, detoxification centres and, in some towns,

even protected places for addicted prostitutes to operate from.

The approach brings problems into the open and keeps most addicts in touch with health and social workers.

The Dutch are proud of the results. While hard drug use continues to rise in most of Europe, the number of addicts in the Netherlands has stabilised at about 20,000 in a population of 15 million.

Cannabis use is comparatively light and crack cocaine, the scourge of U.S. inner cities, has not caught on here. Drug-related crime is re-

latively low and fewer young people are using drugs. The average age of the country's addicts has risen from 27 to 32 over the past decade.

Despite growing enthusiasm for their approach abroad, Dutch experts warn it won't work everywhere. "It depends so much on culture and the economic situation," says Mr. Fransman.

The policy meshes with a tolerant approach to other social issues and enjoys broad support among Dutch politicians and the population at large — crucial in getting necessary funding.

Study says no increased risk of leukemia for most after Chernobyl

LONDON (AP) — A new study suggests Eastern Europeans exposed to fall-out from the Chernobyl nuclear accident have no increased risk of getting leukemia.

"For the vast majority of individuals living in the eastern part of Europe, there should not be any danger," said Dr. Per Hall, the leading investigator from the Karolinska Hospital in Sweden.

The findings do not apply to people at the Chernobyl nuclear plant when a reactor exploded in 1986, or living elsewhere in the Ukraine.

Dr. Hall said this is the first study to calculate individual absorption of radiation in the bone marrow, where leukemia starts.

Investigators studied nearly 47,000 people who received radiation therapy for

thyroid disease.

These patients were exposed to a level of radiation "not far from what many individuals received after the Chernobyl accident," said Dr. Hall in a telephone interview.

The study is published in the latest issue of the *Lancet*, a British medical journal.

Dr. Daniel Hoffman, assistant director for Science/En-

vironmental Health at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta, said using information from thyroid patients exposed to radiation to make predictions about people exposed to radiation from Chernobyl fall-out has "uncertainties, but is a reasonable approach."

Dr. Hoffman said the findings that low levels of radiation do not increase the risk

of leukemia are "consistent with previous studies."

Although doctors have long known that people exposed to high doses of radiation, such as atomic bomb survivors, are at increased risk of getting leukemia, they have not been certain about the hazards of lower levels, said Dr. Hall.

Radiation spreads through the body, but the bulk of its effects go to the thyroid, a butterfly-shaped gland straddling the wind-pipe. It shrinks thyroid tumours by de-

stroying rapidly multiplying cells.

Doctors have worried that small quantities of the radiation not absorbed by the thyroid get into the bone marrow and promote leukemia, said Dr. Hall.

Leukemia, cancer of the white blood cells, makes people highly vulnerable to infections and leads to dangerously low levels of red blood cells.

Investigators studied 46,988 Swedish patients,

average age 47. Among those studied, 36,326 patients got radiation for diagnostic purposes, 9,860 got it for hyperthyroidism, and 802 got it for thyroid cancer.

The average dose to bone marrow was about 1.4 rads, a unit of radiation, similar to what many individuals received in countries around the Ukraine, said Dr. Hall. People living close to the reactor received levels of radiation to the bone marrow of 10-20 rads.

Within 21 years, 195 people in the study got leukemia, which is similar to the risk of leukemia among people of the same age not exposed to iodine-131, the active ingredient in radiation therapy, said Dr. Hall.

The findings from this study "should be reassuring to patients given iodine-131 for diagnostic or therapeutic reasons and also to most of those exposed to fall-out from the Chernobyl accident," said Dr. Hall.

WEEKEND CROSSWORD

SYNOLOGY
By Bruce W. Thompson

ACROSS
1 Honey liquor
2 "My Life"
3 Go on —
4 Mariner's compass point
5 Invitation letters
6 Framing or
7 Bismarck
8 Sun prod.
9 Hero Murphy
10 Dan. Robert
11 Jack Lemmon
12 movie
13 "There's nothing
14 One — million
15 Formerly
16 Prepara
17 Potatoes
18 Possessions
19 together
20 — cookie
21 Artist Norman
22 Peppermint

DOWN
1 Recurring theme
2 Race prod.
3 (couple)
4 Disney dwarf
5 Neigh
6 From this place
7 Wings
8 " — the season to
9 ship Dr.
10 Communicated
11 — jury
12 Japanese herbs
13 Act effectively
14 Certain tree fruit
15 Captured back
16 Transportation in
17 old song
18 Blood carrier
19 Favorite

Diagramless 19 x 19, By James Barrick

ACROSS
1 Sufficiently skilled
2 Cain
3 Part of AWOL
4 Permit
5 Imaginary
6 Baby talk
7 Notched, as a
8 Perpetually
9 postively
10 Haywire native
11 Auld lang —

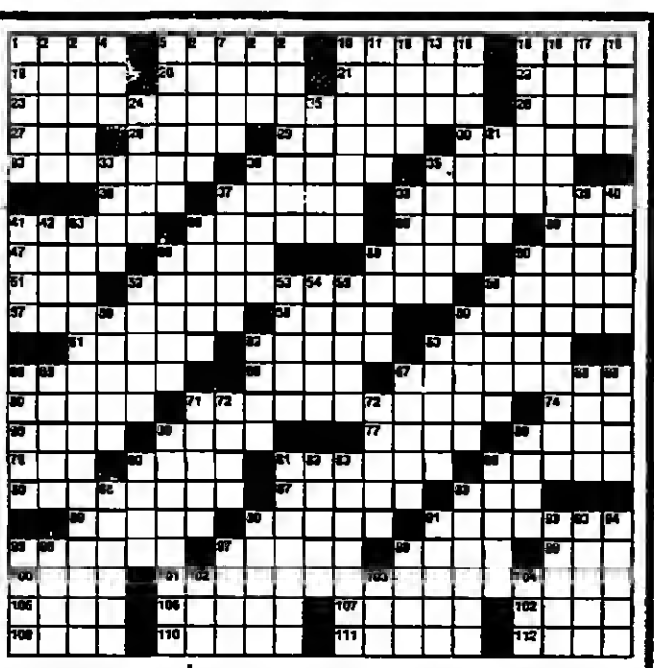
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1 Reference book
2 Actress Arthur
3 Great and Fingert
4 — once to a white
5 Whiskey
6 Actor Watch
7 Toward shaver
8 Bay
9 Finger
10 Linger
11 Lasting love
12 Bird
13 Added color to

35 To some extent
36 "My Life"
37 Keweenaw's neighbor
38 Invitation letters
39 Framing or
40 Bismarck
41 Sun prod.
42 Hero Murphy
43 Dan. Robert
44 Jack Lemmon
45 movie
46 "There's nothing
47 One — million
48 Formerly
49 Prepara
50 Potatoes
51 Possessions
52 together
53 — cookie
54 Artist Norman
55 Peppermint

56 Tracking dog
57 Scandalous
58 Connet part
59 Act of treason
60 Men — (marked by honesty)
61 Ticker tape
62 Queen of Heaven
63 House master
64 Suitcases
65 Wax-coated cheese
66 Holy man
67 Holy game
68 Oriented about
69 "Sing — of
70 "Sing — of
71 "Sing — of
72 "Sing — of
73 "Sing — of
74 "Sing — of

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Mossad, CIA cooperation

(Continued from page 4)

federal jury in New York in 1990 of charges involving an attempted sale of aircraft to Iran which Mr. Ben-Menasse says was sanctioned by Israel and the U.S. His detractors, have dismissed him as a "minor translator" for Aman, Israel's military intelligence agency, and afflicted by "serious personality disorders".

However, several U.S. journalists have confirmed with Israeli officials that Mr. Ben-Menasse worked in the external relations

unit of Israeli Military Intelligence. Pazit Ravina, the foreign editor of Davar, the Israeli Labour Party's paper, obtained an acknowledgement from former Aman chief Gen. Yehoshua Saguy that, although Saguy never knew Mr. Ben-Menasse personally, it could very well have been "that during his time at my office Ben-Menasse sat in the second or third row." Moshe Hebron, who served as Saguy's chief of staff at the time, did remember Mr. Ben-Menasse and told Mr. Ravina that: "Ben-Menasse was directly

under my authority. During my work as chief of staff for Saguy, I knew him for more than ten years. He was a desk man who worked in Foreign Flow. Within the framework of his role, I often called upon him to take part in discussions with the head of intelligence office."

Mr. Saguy told Mr. Ravina that Mr. Ben-Menasse had had access to "material that was not within his authority to know. I do not want to touch it, especially since it involves money," he added. Mr. Ben-Menasse has told journalists that the Ora Group, the

arms sales network he says he ran, banked a slush fund of over \$1 billion in profits, some of which was spent on settlements in the occupied territories.

Some journalists who have interviewed Mr. Ben-Menasse believe that the Israeli aggrandises his role in operations to which he may have had only a tangential connection — or perhaps, as Yigal Laviv, an investigative reporter at the Israeli paper Hadashot, suggests, that he learned of through classified documents obtained in the course of his intelligence work.

Gypsy ways clash with Islam in Iraq

By Leon Barkho
Reuters

BAGHDAD — Iraq's effort to get gypsies to settle down in a Baghdad suburb has resulted in a clash of cultures between their singing and dancing and neighbours' respect for Islamic codes.

Residents of Abu Ghraib, an outlying district of Baghdad, have written a complaint about their gypsy neighbours which has come to the attention of Iraq's president, Saddam Hussein.

"Public morals and ethics and the right values of honour must be respected," President Hussein said in a response appearing on the front page of the government newspaper Al Jumhuriyah.

"To preserve their honour and reputation, neighbours have the right to request the evacuation of

those showing disrespect to these values," the president said.

But the president took no decision and referred the matter to parliament, which has yet to act.

"We will discuss it but I don't know what we are going to do," assembly Speaker Saadi Mehdi Saleh told Reuters in an interview.

"On the surface, Iraqi gypsies are considered to be Muslims, but what they do is against Islam."

"Dancing and singing — not fully-clothed dance. Islam rejects that," he added.

There are only about 7,500 gypsies in Iraq but their reputation far outweighs their numbers.

They are famous for their dancing and singing, which many Iraqis enjoy, but they are snubbed socially.

The gypsies themselves do not think they pose a social threat.

"We are not a problem. We are part of Iraqi culture. There is nothing immoral in our songs, dances and entertainment," said one gypsy leader who refused to be named.

Asked how he viewed threats to move his people if they did not change their ways, he said: "We took the news seriously. But we are still ready to defend ourselves. We have become urbanised and our current activities are not much different from what takes place in Baghdad's night clubs."

Taha Al Hadithi, professor of ethnography at Mosul University and author of a book on Iraqi gypsies, said they are of Indian origin.

"They belong to the Indian tribe of Lore and subsequently migrated into Iraq in small, suc-

cessive waves," he said, adding that they are known locally as Kawaliya or Qaraj.

"They have a cultural permanency that has contributed to their survival as a distinct community with a preserved fundamental character," he said. "Kawaliyas are Muslims but they rarely follow the Islamic tradition."

He said most of those living in Baghdad (about 50 per cent of the country's gypsy population) were "settled in modern houses on orders from ... President Saddam Hussein."

"I am against their evacuation. I am ready to defend their case in parliament," Mr. Hadithi said.

"It is very difficult to change the framework of Kawaliyas activity," he added. "Their neighbours enjoy their (gypsies) singing, dancing and other forms of entertainment at night and become hostile to them during the day."

"They have been on the move for decades. It was time they settled down once for all," he said.

But some parliament members feel Abu Ghraib gypsies have exceeded the limits set for proper conduct in Baghdad.

"They pose health, social and security hazards to their neighbours," Al Jumhuriyah reported the head of the religious affairs committee in parliament as saying.

Members of this committee have proposed evacuating Abu Ghraib gypsies to sites far away from urban centres where "they will be under constant health and security supervision to provide them with protection and health care."

Mr. Saleh, the assembly speaker, said no decision will be taken without "first consulting them (the gypsies) and giving them the right to attend any debate in parliament on their future."

Other deputies said they had no interest in bringing up the issue of the Kawaliya in parliament.

"We have more important topics to discuss," one deputy said. "I hope the Kawaliya have got the message. And that is it."

House sends law back to Senate

(Continued from page 1)

"In an atmosphere of democracy, can any action be taken against anyone without the proper legal background?" he asked.

Thirty-eight of the 64 deputies who attended Wednesday's session of the House voted to send back the draft to the Senate.

Proposing the referral, Maftaq Deputy Abdul Karim Dughmil appeared to sum up the mood among deputies that the extensive "point-by-point" discussions that produced a compromise and led to the House endorsement of the law were enough and that the Senate should not attempt to incorporate any change of its own.

"We do not agree to change anything that was originally approved by the Lower House," said Mr. Dughmil. "We propose that the House insist on the draft law as it was approved by the House and... refuse the amendments introduced by the Upper House."

Leith Shbeilat, an Amman deputy, seconded the motion despite what he said were his "reservations on the issue."

"Since this House has studied the law thoroughly before endorsing it, I second (the motion) and request the House and my colleagues to reject the amendments," he said.

All Al Faqr, another Amman deputy, referred to the "conciliatory gesture" of the House in reaching a compromise with the government over the law and insisted that the Senate-originated amendments be rejected.

Abdul Rahim Al Ekoni

(Irbid), also voicing support for moving the law back to the House of Notables, expressed "surprise over the Senate's decisions" and said: "We believe that this would only delay the enactment of the law, leading to confusion in organising political activities."

In reply, Mr. Hindawi, the deputy prime minister who is also minister of education and member of the House, affirmed the government's commitment to its agreement with the House. He explained that the government had "given in to the Senate" and agreed to the amendments only to ensure that the law is ready for enactment during the present extraordinary session of Parliament.

If the Senate insists on its position, then a joint session of the two houses will be held and the opinion of a simple majority of their combined strength will prevail. Issuance of a Royal Decree endorsing the law is the final phase before the legislation goes into effect.

During Wednesday's session, the House also approved an agreement between the government and South Korea's Hanbo Energy Company under which

Hanbo will undertake oil and gas exploration in the Kingdom on a production-sharing basis.

Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Ali Abul Ragheb briefed the House on the merits of the six-year agreement under which Hanbo will invest \$17 million in the Kingdom. The accord gives the company a 25-year concession with a provision for extension.

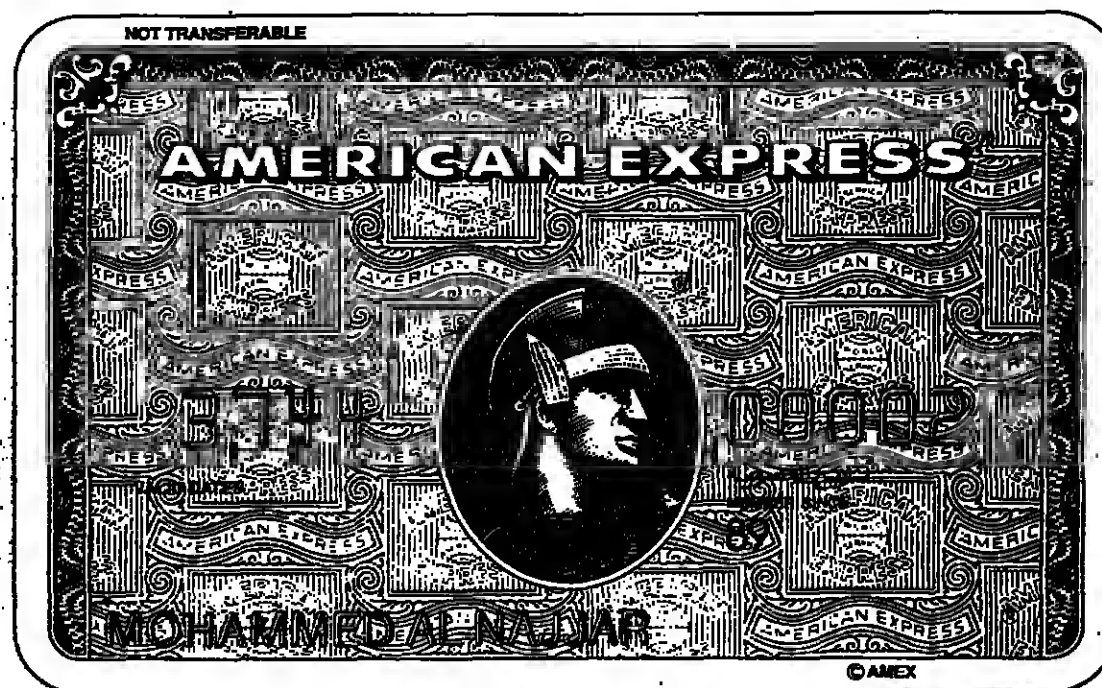
Mr. Abul Ragheb also announced that the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources had made plans to grant a tender to Asian firms to conduct seismological surveys in the Jordan Valley region in the course of oil exploration.

The House also decided to issue a statement prepared by its Palestine Committee on the Middle East peace process, Israel's arbitrary practices against the Palestinians and His Majesty King Hussein's decision to finance the restoration of Islamic holy sites in occupied Jerusalem.

The House decided to send a statement to the U.N. secretary-general denouncing the "American blockade against Cuba."

It said that a full statement will be issued Thursday.

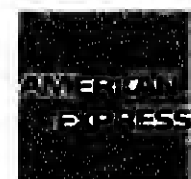
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Honecker

(Continued from page 1)

the Chilean Embassy in Moscow. His wife waved farewell, and he was driven to Moscow's Vnukovo-2 airport for the flight to Berlin.

Honecker's trial will be the biggest yet of former East bloc leaders who were deposed in the tide of popular revolutions in Eastern Europe in 1989-90. The only trial similar to what Mr. Honecker faces is taking place in Bulgaria, where communist leader Todor Zhivkov has been on trial for a year for allegedly exceeding his authority.

Financial Markets

Currency	NEW YORK CLOSE Date: 28/7/92	TOKYO CLOSE Date: 29/7/92
US Dollar	1.9310	1.9305
Deutsche Mark	1.4730	1.4737
Swiss Franc	1.3057	1.3058
French Franc	4.9760	4.9774
Japanese Yen	127.40	127.94
European Currency Unit	1.3840	1.3845

Source: Reuters
* 1 week opening 9:00 a.m. GMT

Currency	1 MONTH	3 MONTHS	6 MONTHS	12 MONTHS
US Dollar	3.38	3.31	3.30	3.28
Deutsche Mark	10.00	10.12	10.18	10.18
Swiss Franc	9.68	9.68	9.68	9.62
French Franc	8.37	8.37	8.37	8.31
Japanese Yen	10.06	10.18	10.18	10.18
European Currency Unit	3.93	3.93	3.93	3.93

Commodity	NEW YORK CLOSE Date: 29/7/92	TOKYO CLOSE Date: 29/7/92
Gold	384.75	384.75
Silver	5.96	5.96

Currency	1 MONTH	3 MONTHS	6 MONTHS	12 MONTHS
US Dollar	0.668	0.670	0.670	0.670
Deutsche Mark	1.2875	1.2939	1.2939	1.2939
Swiss Franc	0.5177	0.5143	0.5143	0.5143
French Franc	0.1341	0.1348	0.1348	0.1348
Japanese Yen	0.5225	0.5251	0.5251	0.5251
Dutch Guilder	0.4015	0.4035	0.4035	0.4035
Swedish Krona	0.1248	0.1254	0.1254	0.1254
Italian Lira	0.0599	0.0602	0.0602	0.0602
Belgian Franc	0.0495	0.0500	0.0500	0.0500

Currency	1 MONTH	3 MONTHS	6 MONTHS	12 MONTHS
US Dollar	1.7430	1.7540	1.7540	1.7540
Deutsche Mark	0.03180	0.03180	0.03180	0.03180
Swiss Franc	0.1775	0.1790	0.1790	0.1790
French Franc	2.2400	2.3300	2.3300	2.3300
Japanese Yen	0.1813	0.1825	0.1825	0.1825
Italian Lira	0.2100	0.2250	0.2250	0.2250
Belgian Franc	1.7830	1.7800	1.7800	1.7800
Swedish Krona	0.1813	0.1825	0.1825	0.1825
Japanese Yen	0.3650	0.3650	0.3650	0.3650
Italian Lira	1.5698	1.5698	1.5698	1.5698

Index	27/7/92	28/7/92	29/7/92
AS Share	139.96	140.00	140.00
Banking Sector	101.69	102.07	102.07
Insurance Sector	150.32	149.98	149.98
Industry Sector	193.40	192.88	192.88
Services Sector	178.62	179.14	179.14

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at mid-session on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Wednesday.

One Sterling	1.9275/85	U.S. dollars
One U.S. dollar	1.1871/76	Canadian dollar
	1.47/48	Deutsche marks
	1.6630/40	Dutch guilders
	1.30/31	Swiss francs
	30.35/39	Belgian francs
	4.9825/75	French francs
	1114/1115	Italian lire
	127.35/40	Japanese yen
	5.3434/85	Swedish crowns
	5.6765/7915	Norwegian crowns
	5.6646/95	Danish crowns
One ounce of gold	\$358.25/\$358.75	

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JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	1.859	2.770	2.770
JORDAN SWISS BANK	5.585	1.870	1.870
JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	2.500	2.500	2.500
JORDAN DEVELOPMENT BANK	2.511	2.000	2.000
JORDAN BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	330	1.940	1.940
JORDAN INVESTMENT & TRADING BANK	54.558	3.140	3.150
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/OLD	29.749	1.140	1.150
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/NEW	144	1.080	1.090
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	93.677	2.230	2.230
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/NEW	262.421	2.430	2.430
JORDAN BANK	157	14.250	14.250
JORDAN INVESTMENT	32.420	112.500	112.500
JORDAN INVESTMENT	2.750	2.750	2.750
JORDAN INVESTMENT	2.214	2.450	2.450
JORDAN LIFE & ACCIDENT INSURANCE	248	2.300	2.320
JORDAN LIFE & ACCIDENT INSURANCE	749	1.640	1.700
JORDAN ELECTRIC POWER	2.000	1.260	1.290
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	5.052	4.050	4.040
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	27.236	1.340	1.340
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	981	5.400	5.400
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	339.134	1.560	1.560
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	39	0.200	0.270
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	7.121	1.010	1.010
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	7.323	0.940	0.940
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	33.770	0.690	0.690
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	28.308	1.340	1.340
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	32.424	2.530	2.530
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	68.518	7.800	8.000
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	29.140	9.900	9.900
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	3.285	8.770	8.850
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	70.758	22.000	22.250
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	128.339	4.680	4.700
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	11.378	6.650	6.650
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	11.944	3.700	3.700
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	373	7.100	7.450
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	7.386	0.760	0.750
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	3.480	3.500	3.480
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	400.094	3.040	3.050
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	2.930	0.800	0.890
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	2.075	4.130	4.150
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	21.375	13.300	13.300
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	9.225	3.350	3.350
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	1.066	1.650	1.640
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	21.710	1.120	1.110
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	79.925	2.110	2.100
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	15.438	6.600	6.570
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	33.089	3.650	3.650
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	9.542	1.260	1.250
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	9.470	0.590	0.590
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	175.007	5.110	5.100
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	56.478	2.190	2.180
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	6.694	8.320	8.360

Jordanian-Syrian company eyes investment projects

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Beo Shaker stressed Wednesday the need to use all expertise available in Jordan and Syria to safeguard the national interests of both countries.

The prime minister was speaking at a meeting in his office with Ahmad Nizam Uddin, the Syrian Minister of Industry, and the Minister of Industry and Trade, Abdullah Ensour.

The prime minister was briefed on the joint-Jordanian Syrian Industry Company's efforts to promote joint industrial projects that lead to economic integration.

Earlier, Dr. Ensour and Dr. Nizamuddin co-chaired the company's general assembly meeting to review past year achievements and plans for 1992 and 1993.

The joint industry company, established in 1976 with a capital of JD 20 million, operates two factories; one produces 84,000 tonnes of white cement in Jordan annually and started in 1985, the second produces wall-to-wall carpets in Syria.

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Leading real estate developer sees short-lived construction euphoria

In this third and final part of the review on the building boom in Amman, a young but very experienced real estate developer evaluates the general construction activity. He says his remarks reflect lessons learnt from past trial and error ventures — some of which cost him dearly.



Muawia Zabian

By Samir Shafiq
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — "The construction of apartment buildings in Amman will continue to rise for another year but the boom will slow down after that," Muawia Zabian, general manager of Beit Al Mal Saving and Investment for Housing (Beitma), has predicted.

Asked if the market would be saturated by that time or if higher prices would be a cause for the downturn, Mr. Zabian had a completely different explanation.

"Demand for apartments and villas will continue to grow but the supply and availability of such homes will be far in excess as a result of tens of contractors who have, and are still, joining the euphoria of apartment buildings," Mr. Zabian said.

"This rush will definitely reflect negatively on all the builders by sharpening the competition to levels where losses and illiquidity crunches will begin to rock the real estate investors and to force a general deep cooling of apartment building boom."

The young and energetic general manager continued his analysis looking back to the 1980s when Marwan Al Abdallat, a private investor, broke new ground by shifting housing construction from the traditional four or five real estate financing and housing institutions, which dominated the market at that time, to a wider commercial involvement of independent contractors.

"Marwan is one of the few pioneers who successfully initiated the new approach for building apartments, but he was eclipsed over the years by his associates who turned competitors and who, for their part, gave rise to new groups of competitors who started as their associates also," Mr. Zabian said.

He foresees a gloomy fate to the bandwagon into which tens of engineers/builders/businessmen have jumped seeking quick fortunes.

Mr. Zabian credited the Real Estate Finance Corporation (REFCO) for being the first institution to embark on housing projects as early as the 1960s although the name of the corporation was not known as REFCO at that time.

Other companies entered the field of real estate financing in the following decade, but the most renowned was the Housing Bank, which was set up in 1973.

The real estate financing and housing schemes emerged gradually in the mid-seventies but only accelerated in 1978 and the subsequent years, after a legal framework on apartment apportionment was set up in the above mentioned year.

According to Mr. Zabian, there were many attempts, since 1976, to formulate regulations to govern ownership, sale, transfer and other transactions in the apartment construction

business, but these endeavours came out to be successful only in 1978 when a major demand for housing helped prop up construction activity.

The Beitma general manager said his company was the latest to be licensed at the end of 1983, noting that the request for a licence was made in 1982 to accept savings, finance investments and issue real estate related guarantees and other services within this framework.

By joining some four or five companies operating in the same field, the Beitma general manager said the market was going well for all the parties until 1987 when the real estate business fell, along with other economic sectors, into a recession that stretched up to 1989-1991.

"Of the many firms which ran into financial difficulties as a result of the recession one merged with another financial institution. Another one obtained a refuge by securing a cash injection from a bank, while a couple more are still struggling to survive through all forms of restructuring arrangements," he said declining to mention the names of the firms.

"Even Beitma suffered, but the damages were narrowed to the lowest possible range as a result of quick remedial procedures that were adopted," he elaborated.

Mr. Zabian emphasised that being in real estate financing and construction schemes needs a thorough understanding of the market, a high degree of management skills and an ability to accept new concepts.

He said that bureaucracy and the distance between the various degrees of a management hierarchy and the working site loosen actual and proper control. That, he said, was undoubtedly a reason why many real estate companies did not succeed.

Noting that a couple of real estate financing companies in Jordan have originally gone into this type of business only as a first step to secure a full commercial banking licence in subsequent years, Mr. Zabian attributed the rough times others faced to the fact that they did not put their building investments under their own direct and daily control and supervision.

"In Beitma, we are our own contractors," he emphasised. Mr. Zabian, who himself is a civil engineer, highlighted diversification as a key element to a contractor's success saying that it is necessary to branch out into various types of buildings because should a certain type of construction get hit for any reason it would not be fatal for an investor.

Besides flexibility and ability to change, the well-experienced Zabian put great emphasis on "accepting the new concepts" approach. He pointed out that new techniques and advanced methods in construction, marketing and research are continuously becoming sophisticated and it was imperative to adapt to these new concepts to maintain a steady growth.

As an example, Mr. Zabian pointed to the traditional Housing Bank for real estate and the traditional construction methods of the Housing Corporation.

He explained that a loan secondary market or a loan guarantee scheme was a common phenomenon in industrialised countries and implementing such a system in Jordan would be a pioneering project whereby the government can provide low-income citizens with good quality housing at a lower cost.

Asked to comment about the type of a house a typical Jordanian family would demand, Mr. Zabian said:

"Due to the lack of a housing strategy which provides homes at various stages corresponding to the size of a family and its financial capabilities, Jordanians build or buy their homes to suit them for a lifetime. As such, a Jordanian family demands the largest possible area at the lowest possible cost."

"Don't forget that Jordanians care very much that their home entrances be of a grandiose design," Mr. Zabian said, emphasising that the general outside appearance of a home was of more concern to some citizens than the general quality of the buildings.

Italy's Amato pushes for quick wage accord

ROME (R) — Prime Minister Giuliano Amato, battling with Italy's worst economic crisis in a decade, has told unions and industrialists they must reach an accord quickly to limit wage and income growth.

Failure to do so, he said, would force the government to adopt tough tax policies.

Speaking at the start of three-way negotiations between the government, unions and employers, Mr. Amato said the seriousness of Italy's economic position meant there could be no delay.

He said an accord to reform Italy's complex system of wage bargaining and restrain the growth of labour costs, seen as a driving force behind inflation, had to be in place by Sept. 15, according to official sources.

The Amato government needs parliamentary approval for a battery of measures to contain a spiralling state deficit by the end of September, when it must present its budgetary proposals for 1993.

"Government policy must be reinforced by coherent action from the country's economic and social partners," said Mr. Amato, referring to unions and industry.

Urgent action was necessary because of "the very grave economic crisis and the decline in international confidence to Italy's chances of respecting the Maastricht accords (on EC monetary union)," he said.

Maastricht laid down tough qualifications on inflation and public sector deficits for entry to the European Community's (EC) planned monetary union, which were always going to be difficult for Italy to meet.

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Interested persons may pick an application form from the embassy and submit it complete with a recent photograph to the attention of Personnel Officer. Deadline for accepting applications is August 3, 1992.

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- Administration/Secretary** with diploma in secretarial skills, computer literate, well organised and reliable.

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U.N. calls for 'open borders' in Yugoslav refugee crisis

GENEVA (Agencies) — The top United Nations refugee official Wednesday appealed to all governments to keep their borders open to a mounting tide of homeless people fleeing the fighting in former Yugoslavia.

High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata told a one-day U.N. conference on the crisis: "In line with their responsibilities towards asylum seekers, all states within or outside the region should provide temporary protection to persons fleeing former Yugoslavia."

As European states pledged new funds to help contain the crisis, the conference heard warnings that while human catastrophe loomed in the Balkans it could be repeated elsewhere in former Communist countries.

"Keeping borders open for those who need protection is an important act of solidarity and also reflects burden-sharing," said Mr. Ogata, who convened the conference on how to deal with the humanitarian emergency in the region.

A senior medical officer for the U.N.'s World Health Organisation (WHO), Sir Donald Acheson, warned delegates: there was "real risk of catastrophe" this winter unless the nearly two million homeless had suitable shelter.

U.N. Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs Jan Eliasson, calling for an end to ethnic terror forcing people to abandon towns and villages, urged governments to agree to a coordinated programme.

The conference was convened against a background of bickering among West European countries over the refugees, with Germany complaining that others — especially Britain and France — were not taking a fair share of the flow.

Germany pledged Wednesday to take in several thousand more Bosnian refugees if a United Nations conference does not agree on a European plan to help the victims of war in former Yugoslavia.

Interior minister Rudolf Seiters said he still hoped the emergency conference called by the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Geneva would convince other European states to take in as many displaced people as Germany has.

But Mr. Seiters admitted that Bonn, which last weekend added 5,600 Bosnians to the 200,000 refugees already sitting out the winter here, had almost no allies on this issue among its European partners.

"There's no use fooling ourselves, we're quite isolated on this," Mr. Seiters told a radio interviewer.

"If the German position cannot win, then the federal government and the states certainly will have to and will want to start another round of refugee intakes."

Meanwhile the first group of Canadian peacekeepers which secured Sarajevo Airport for relief flights left the Bosnian capital Wednesday to be replaced by Ukrainian soldiers, U.N. officials said.

In western Herzegovina, Serbs reported attacks on two fronts by Croats.

In London, leaders of Bosnia's warring ethnic factions met in European Community mediated talks on finding a political solution that could bring peace in war-torn Bosnia.

But fighting raged in the republic overnight.

The Belgrade-based Tanjug News Agency, citing a statement by Serb forces in Bosnia, reported that Croats pounded Serb positions with artillery near Mostar in Herzegovina.

An all-night attack by Croats around Serb-held Trebinje, east of the Croatian port of Dubrovnik, was repulsed, Tanjug said.

Croatian Radio reported sporadic machine gun fire on the outskirts of Sarajevo's old town overnight. Sarajevo was shelled early Tuesday, but later in the day there was quiet.

At least 7,500 people have been killed in Bosnia since the majority Muslims and Croats voted Feb. 29 for independence. But some estimates say tens of thousands of people have died.

Bosnia's Serbs, who want to remain part of Serb-dominated Yugoslavia, have captured about two-thirds of Bosnian territory.

The first group of about 1,000 Canadian peacekeepers who were moved to Sarajevo from Croatia last month to secure the airport and open it for relief flights left Wednesday morning.

On Tuesday, a group of about 370 Ukrainian soldiers in a 90-vehicle convoy left Belgrade, the Serbian and Yugoslav capital, en route to Sarajevo to replace the Canadians. A group of Egyptian soldiers was to follow Thursday.

The Ukrainians stopped for the night at Vlasenica, about 50 kilometres northeast of Sarajevo, and there was no indication by noon that they had arrived in the Bosnian capital.

A U.N. relief convoy of 21 trucks was also on its way to Sarajevo. It left the Croatian port of Split Tuesday and also had to stop the night, about 70 kilometres northwest of the city.

U.N. officials in Zagreb had no word on its progress Wednesday. If the convoy safely passes the front line at Kiseljak, 20 kilometres outside the city, it could be an important indicator of the feasibility of opening a land corridor to augment relief flights.

In London, little progress was reported toward ending the nearly 5-month-old ethnic war at peace talks. The Foreign Minister of Bosnia's Muslim-led government, Haris Silajdzic, said he will not negotiate before there is a firm ceasefire.

In another development, Serb and Croat officers were to meet Wednesday on the Royal Navy frigate *Avenger* outside territorial waters not far from the Croatian port Dubrovnik.

They were to discuss withdrawal of their forces from the area scene of heavy fighting last year. The Yugoslav army Tuesday denied claims by senior Bosnian officials that it sent tanks into the warring republic to rescue Serb fighters surrounded by Muslim forces.

Mr. Silajdzic and presidential adviser Hajrudin Sotman claimed that between 60 and 100 tanks crossed from Serbian territory and headed for the northern Bosnian town of Breko.

A statement by the army's general staff in Belgrade accused Mr. Silajdzic of trying to provoke foreign military intervention and added: "The Yugoslav army's tanks are on Yugoslav territory."

Mr. Sotman, who could not be reached for comment on the army's denial, said the tank force had come from the Valjevo region of western Serbia and was trying to aid Serb irregulars trapped in Breko.

The army was withdrawn from Bosnia in May in an attempt by Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic to distance himself from a conflict which the West has accused him of fomenting.

Russian lawmakers Tuesday failed to agree what to do about a string of islands seized from Japan in the closing days of World War II, a news agency reported.

The debate was held in advance of President Boris Yeltsin's planned trip to Tokyo this fall. Although some lawmakers urged Mr. Yeltsin to cancel or postpone the trip, a legislative panel merely voted to send him a transcript of the debate, the ITAR-TASS News Agency said.

A majority of the Russian Supreme Soviet deputies opposed the idea of returning the four islands to Japan, saying Japan had no legal grounds for them, the news agency said.

After annexing the islands north of Japan in 1945, the Soviet Union turned them into a major military outpost on its Pacific flank. Some Russians now worry that the islands' loss would be a blow to Russia's Pacific defenses.

The dispute has been a major sticking point in relations between the two countries and has stifled Japanese aid and investment in the former Soviet republic.

Japan and the Soviet Union never signed a peace treaty formally ending World War II. Moscow insists on signing a pact before reviewing the islands' status, but Tokyo wants Russia to acknowledge its control before or along with the treaty.

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He was speaking after stormy scenes in the Moscow parliament over the future of four Russian-held islands off northern Japan.

Tokyo insists on their return before it will give Russia urgently needed economic aid. Conservatives, backed by the military, warned Mr. Yeltsin Tuesday not to sacrifice Russian territory for short-term gain.

So could the Russian leader feel obliged to postpone his trip? "As far as we're concerned, President Yeltsin's visit is a Japanese official said.

"We don't really have a list of expectations at this point because details of the visit have not been agreed upon," he said.

Foreign minister Michio Watanabe is on record saying there is no point in Mr. Yeltsin coming to Tokyo empty-handed.

Two weeks ago, amidst preparations for Mr. Yeltsin's visit, a frustrated Watanabe told a Russian official in Tokyo: "It is no good if President Yeltsin's visit in September turns out to be the same as that of (Soviet leader Mikhail) Gorbachev. He must make a step forward."

That is more easily said than done, judging by Tuesday's heated exchanges in the Russian parliament.

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They said a committee to resolve the nation had taken over and appealed for calm. But they fled the building after three hours and disappeared in the sprawling Malagasy capital.

Crowds of curious residents converged on the radio station to see what was happening but there was no general uprising in the capital, scene of violent protests Mr. Ratsiraka in the past 18 months.

The coup leaders said they would respect faltering steps towards democracy Mr. Ratsiraka has reluctantly taken and that economic, political and moral renewal would be their watchwords.

Michel, a priest, is a former head of the National Development Council, a body similar to a chamber of commerce and one of many semi-state organisations set up in a mushrooming bureaucracy Mr. Ratsiraka used to create employment.

Little else is known about the pastor and his exact links to the soldiers who said they had staged the coup were not clear.

Since Mr. Ratsiraka lifted a ban on political parties, a wide range of groups have emerged reflecting every shade of opinion on the island, whose Malay-African population practices just about all varieties of religion from catholicism to witchcraft.

Power in Madagascar is often based on cults. Many of Mr. Ratsiraka's young supporters and opponents belong to martial arts societies and have frequently clashed in Kung Fu fights.

Mr. Ratsiraka, an autocratic leftist who was a late convert to pluralist democracy, was said by officials to be in his presidential palace and made no statement.

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A Moldovan reservist is instructing a young recruit on loading a rifle clip

Peace force moves into Moldova's Dnestr region

MOSCOW (R) — The first peacekeeping troops moved into Moldova's Dnestr region Wednesday after a late-night deal between Russia, Moldova and the self-styled Dnestr Republic, Interfax News Agency said.

Interfax quoted a Moldovan official as saying that representatives of the three sides had agreed late Tuesday to send the first troops to the region.

Five Russian battalions of peacekeepers were due to be followed by three Moldovan battalions and two from the Breakaway Dnestr Region.

Slav separatists in Dnestr are afraid they will become second-class citizens if Moldova strengthens ties with its ethnic twin Romania. Hundreds have died in fighting this year.

Moldova is the second region of the former Soviet Union where a Commonwealth peacekeeping force is trying to quell bitter ethnic fighting.

The first such force was dispatched earlier this month to Georgia's breakaway region of South Ossetia.

The Commonwealth of Independent States, which replaced the disintegrating Soviet Union late last year, has agreed to set up its own force of peacekeepers ready to move to trouble spots and prevent ethnic violence from spiralling out of control.

Romanian troops had originally been invited to form part of an international peacekeeping force in Moldova, but the Romanian parliament delayed and decision on this earlier this month, saying a political solution was needed to end ethnic bloodshed.

A shaky ceasefire took effect in the region this month.

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7-year-old pleads guilty to rape

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — One of two 7-year-old boys charged with delinquency in the alleged rape of a first-grade girl in a school restroom pleaded guilty and agreed to testify against the other boy. Accompanied by his mother, the boy appeared scared but confidently answered questions at a hearing before Marion County magistrate Susan Boatwright-Simon, witnesses said.

The child, whose trial was to start Tuesday, admitted involvement in the March 26 attack. Sentencing was set for Sept. 10. After their arrests, the boys were allowed to stay home to await trial. Under a plea agreement, the boy will be on probation for at least two years, get counseling and have no contact with the victim. He also agreed to testify at the other boy's trial, set to begin on Sept. 10. If the agreement is broken, the court could remove the child from his home, said deputy prosecutor Gary Chavers. "The victim's mother is pleased with the plea," Mr. Chavers said, "and from the state's standpoint, we're happy that this individual is willing to testify against the other individual."

KGB bugged Raisa's hairdresser, Yeltsin's bath

MOSCOW (R) — KGB agents, out to protect the Communist Party, tapped the telephone of Raisa Gorbachev's hairdresser and bugged Boris Yeltsin's bath house, a Russian journalist told a court hearing on the party's activities. ITAR-TASS News Agency said Yevgeni Albits told Russia's constitutional court that the KGB and the party were virtually one and the same. "The two power structures were closely interlinked," Ms. Albits said. Ms. Albits, who served as an adviser to a parliament commission on last August's failed hard-line coup, said she learned of the KGB actions from commission documents. TASS gave no indication of what the agents may have learned from the hairdresser of the wife of former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev or from the public sauna Yeltsin frequented. The constitutional court is hearing arguments that Mr. Yeltsin's post-coup orders banning the party were illegal. Mr. Yeltsin and his allies have counter-attacked, arguing before the court that the activities of the party were illegal and it should be barred.

Louisiana man survives battle with alligator

FRENCH SETTLEMENT, Louisiana (AP) — Craig Dearmond battled an 8-to-10-foot (2 1/2- to 3-metre) alligator under his house on a bank of the Amite River and ended up with more than 200 stitches. "It was just as big as I was and I think he wanted to fight," Mr. Dearmond said. "I knew I was in trouble." Mr. Dearmond, 32, said he went under the house to try to jack it out of the mud Saturday, and he didn't see the alligator until it opened its huge jaws. Mr. Dearmond said he fought the reptile for almost half an hour.

Lone yachtsman saved from atoll

VICTORIA (R) — A lone yachtsman has been rescued from a remote Indian Ocean island atoll after his boat was wrecked in a storm on the last leg of his round-the-world trip. South African Anthony Steadman, 28, survived on coconuts and pawpaws for eight days on Surf Island, part of the Seychelles 115-island chain, pilot Dave Plows told Reuters. Mr. Steadman was trying to become the first yachtsman to circumnavigate the globe alone in the smallest open boat. He left Cape Town in February 1991 and was on his last leg home when he ran into a five-day storm that tore his four-metre home-made boat "Challenger" to pieces, Mr. Plows said. He was saved last week after he fired an emergency flare and attracted a passing state-owned Island Development Corporation (IDC) ship. "He's lucky. If he'd missed Surf Island the next land would be Madagascar or even the east coast of Africa," said Mr. Plows, who flies for IDC and was due to pick Mr. Steadman up from the Farquhar Group of atolls where he was recovering from his ordeal. Mr. Plows said Mr. Steadman was in good health and that he vowed to try the world record trip after he returns home. He also proposed marriage to his girlfriend by radio after being saved.

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Ten soldiers took control of state-run Radio Madagascar and Didier Ratsiraka, in power since 1975, had been replaced by a former chamber of commerce official, Fety Michel.

They said a committee to resolve the nation had taken over and appealed for calm. But they fled the building after three hours and disappeared in the sprawling Malagasy capital.

Crowds of curious residents converged on the radio station to see what was happening but there was no general uprising in the capital, scene of violent protests Mr. Ratsiraka in the past 18 months.

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